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New Statesman

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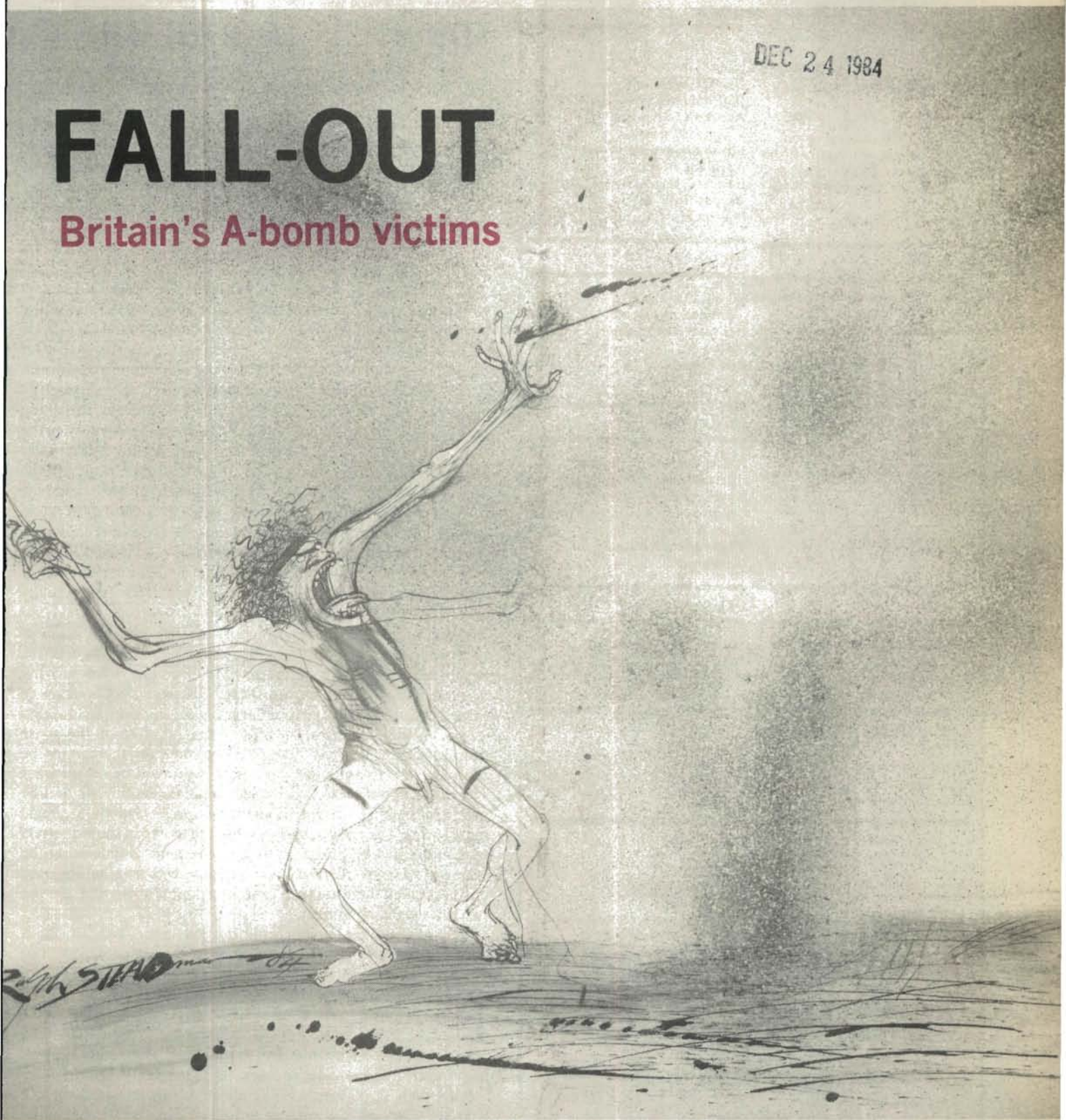
FALL-OUT

Britain's A-bomb victims



PLUS: Twinning with miners • Christmas books • Terry Eagleton in China • The Left re-aligns

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New Statesman

Cover drawing: Ralph Steadman

Britain's A-bomb victims

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New Statesman

Vol 108 No 2802 30 November 1984

Kinnock's kick at the arms mountain

NEVER CAN the desire of European people have been stronger for the unstable mountain of nuclear weapons threatening the world to be dismantled; rarely can they have had less confidence in the will of their leaders to do anything about it. It has become terrifyingly clear that arms control is more about the management of public opinion and holding the superpower alliances together than any serious or urgent effort to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons, let alone get rid of them.

Mr Kinnock's discussions with President Chernenko are therefore an important breakthrough in the view of what arms control talks can be about. An independent initiative by a British government to reduce or scrap its own nuclear arsenal can secure an offer from the USSR to make equivalent reductions, a process of unilateral reciprocity. Of course, President Chernenko's offer does not constitute a copper bottomed guarantee. It contains no details for verifying that the USSR would indeed carry through its reciprocal offer. But it does prove that the Soviet leader, in making his offer to Mr Kinnock, has stepped outside the framework of the Cold War with the USA. An initial talk with an opposition leader could not achieve all aims anyway. What matters is how both the USSR and the Labour Party will follow up this initiative, and how it will change the perception of what is possible in arms negotiations. For in response to Aneurin Bevan's now axiomatic warning that a foreign Minister cannot be sent 'naked into the conference chamber', one has to ask, what conference chamber for arms negotiations have British foreign ministers ever actually walked into?

The conference chamber which is now the focus for hopes of reducing world insecurity is the January meeting in Geneva between Soviet Foreign Secretary Mr Gromyko, who now has unparalleled authority within the USSR, and US Secretary of State Mr Shultz, who exercises scant authority over US foreign affairs. Although any talks offer some relief from the tense hostility of the last few years, the welcome for them must be cautious. We do not know what framework will be set for what agenda. It is not clear that nuclear weapons in Europe will be included when real negotiations start. Space weapons, strategic nuclear weapons and a nuclear test ban are touted in some quarters as offering the best prospects for an agreement. But defining the issues where agreement could take place will be a half-hearted business when there are such profound doubts about whether the two sides want agreement.

This doubt must remain stronger about the American side if only because there is no longer any coherent thrust to US defence policy beyond marshalling the Western allies behind a display of US 'strength'. In Spring 1983, a senior State Department official was quoted in the *New York Times* as declaring that the whole point of the 1983 Geneva negotiations was not to avoid deploying cruise and Pershing missiles, but to whip up the necessary support in Western Europe to get deployment through.

Since then, the situation has deteriorated further with Reagan's 'star wars' speech, a product not of any careful departmental briefing, but a speech-writer's rhetorical declamation. If further evidence is needed that President Reagan has dissolved serious arms control policy making into a highly dangerous PR exercise,

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we should look at his administration's treatment of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. It has reduced its staff, removed its computer and appointed to it people with a track record of detesting arms control.

THIS DEGENERATION of US foreign policy into a crude 'America firstism' makes it all the more urgent that Britain should develop, along with other European countries, its own defence policy. Those who wish to see such political developments have been almost entirely squeezed out of the Thatcher establishment. In a long leading article last Monday, intended as a rallying cry against signs of 'weakness' in the West, *The Times* firmly dissociated itself from the 'liberal establishment'. There must be no re-assessment of Mr Reagan's 'basic principles', it said. This principle (sic) is simply the 'reassertion of American power and self-confidence and an end to appeasement'. Post-war history has been rewritten to suggest that the only reason why countries from Poland to Mozambique are not America's allies is because of the violent enroachments of the Soviet 'evil empire'. The post-war settlements of Yalta and Potsdam, the anti-colonial struggles of Mozambique or Angola are thus neatly deleted from the history books.

Perhaps no-one should be surprised that *The Times*, now a far-flung outpost of Murdoch's US empire, should have abandoned any tradition of independent thought on Europe. That merely reinforces the importance for the disarmament movements of Europe — and that includes East as well as West — of persuing their own political agenda. □

The Law Lords roll over

LAST WEEK's judgment by the Law Lords in the GCHQ case appeared to award a 5 to 0 victory to the Prime Minister over the civil service unions. Given the climate of the times the result was probably inevitable, though it is sad to see even Lord Scarman going along with current fetishism about 'national security'.

But although Mrs Thatcher has her specific victory at GCHQ, all five judges rejected virtually the whole of the government's case, often in quite caustic terms. That case depended at the start on the assertion that all civil servants (including those at GCHQ) are 'servants of the crown'; that government action to set their terms and conditions of service is therefore an exercise of the royal prerogative; and that this means that government treatment of civil servants cannot be reviewed by the courts. This submission was rejected 5 to 0 by the Lords. In the longer term, their judgments could obstruct a government that has shown an increasing tendency to govern not by statute but by executive action, nominally justified as an exercise of the royal prerogative. Lord Roskill put it most forcefully:

> I am unable to see. . .that there is any logical reason why the fact that the source of the power is the prerogative and not statute should today deprive the citizen of the right of challenge to the manner of its exercise. . . . In either case the act in question is the act of the executive. To talk of that act as the act of the sovereign savours of the archaism of past centuries.

This is important, because otherwise Chief Justice Lord Lane's supine judgment at the previous stage of this case in the Court of Appeal would have left in the air the idea that where the executive has spoken the courts cannot stick their noses in. But, having given the principle of judicial review of executive action a substantial boost, the five Law Lords then all rolled over on their backs at the words 'national security' to provide the necessary mat for Mrs Thatcher's feet. If national security had not been involved they suggested, they would have found for the unions and against the government.

Reading between the lines of Lord Scarman's judgment at least there are traces of a more reasonable view of national security trying to get out. He quotes with glowing approval the judgment of Lord Parker in the 1916 case of the *Zamora* — 'surely one of the more courageous of judicial decisions even in our long history' — where the government's claim to the right to seize a cargo of contraband copper was rejected on the grounds that, even in the middle of a World War, it had failed to produce sufficient evidence that a vital issue of national security was involved.

But then Lord Scarman backed off. He accepted the view that 'those who are responsible for the national security must be the sole judges of what the national security requires' and that all Mrs Thatcher had to establish was that, in removing rights to trade union membership without warning or consultation by way of a 'purported' *oral* instruction to the Cabinet secretary on 22 December, 1983, she had reasonable grounds for supposing that 'national security' *might* be affected. This in the Law Lord's view released her from any requirement to observe rules of natural justice.

The Law Lords accepted this argument, even though the government did not even advance it in the original trial. It seems to have been thought up only when it was clear that the 'prerogative' argument was not going to win. National security is not the unambiguous concept that the judges are now seeking to hide behind. (A perfectly respectable argument could be advanced that it would be quite unaffected, if the whole of GCHQ were abolished tomorrow. France, for example, does not have a GCHQ and gives no impression of greater national insecurity.) The Law Lords cannot allow a situation to continue indefinitely where all that a government has to do in order to get round judicial review or to escape the provisions of statute is to assert that it sincerely believes that the national interest is involved. □

HELP MAKE IT A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A CONFIDENT NEW YEAR IN THE PIT VILLAGES

The great majority of miners are still on strike. They and their families are desperately poor. A recent report from Dawdon Miners Distress Centre, Co. Durham, says that 30 per cent of the striking miners are destitute. It reports:

> Our biggest problem at the moment is trying to ensure that our children are dressed and have shoes on their feet.

The reports ends:

> I cannot of course begin to tell you of the desolation we all feel, especially when we are talking about people who are basically honest, who have paid their taxes and debts to this society and who, in any circumstances, are honest citizens and, by their nature, proud and caring parents.

The distress of the miners and their families has not daunted their fighting spirit. They are as determined as ever to save their communities, their jobs and their pits. They have a right to a good Christmas.

This is an urgent appeal for a huge Christmas bonus for the striking miners and their families. A little money goes a long way:

£250 will provide a Christmas dinner for 200
£50 will finance a Christmas party in a miners' welfare hall
£10 will buy a turkey or a toy
£5 will fill a stocking for a miner's child

If all who feel they should do something to help the coal mining communities give some money to this fund, we can ensure for the communities a happy Christmas and a confident New Year.

Please send donations to **Miners Christmas Appeal, c/o Women Against Pit Closures, National Union of Mineworkers, St James' House, Sheffield 1.**

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'LABOUR HAS LOST THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT'

Walworth Rd battles for new Labour tactics

THE NEW STATESMAN has seen the confidential plans for next year's Labour Party 'Jobs and Industry Campaign'. The 57-page document is brutally honest about the party's past failure. JOHN RENTOUL reports

THE MAIN FINDINGS of this major paper, produced at Labour HQ in Walworth Rd, are:

- The party shouldn't use 'anger' in its campaign against mass unemployment
- Labour has lost the economic argument and must start from scratch
- Promises of a return to 'full employment' are overambitious and unconvincing
- And Labour should approach *companies* for donations

'*Jobs and Industry Campaign*' was broadly agreed to by the Campaign Strategy Committee (CSC) chaired by Neil Kinnock on 1 November. (The CSC is a joint committee of Labour's National Executive and the shadow cabinet).

A campaign group to carry out its recommendations is expected to be set up, with John Smith (Monklands East, shadow trade and industry minister) tipped to head it.

Impact of the polls

The text of the paper kicks off with evidence from Labour's own opinion polls that the party '*has little credibility on "policies for dealing with the economy" — we trail behind the Tories by about 15 per cent*'.

The paper proceeds:

'*There is, of course, a danger that we will begin by conceding too much. But unless we realistically assess where we start from, we will not talk in terms that people can understand and we will not be able to win support for our policies.*'

Back to the beginning, therefore:

'*Labour has lost the economic argument. People do not believe that our policies will work. The Keynesian argument appears wholly unconvincing. "It has been tried before and it has failed" is how many people react to Labour's policies. [Or they ask:] "But how will you pay for it?" It creates the image of Labour as the well-meaning party that prints money to solve each and every problem.*'

Negative response to the Conservative government's policies is rejected in favour of 'practical solutions':

'*Should we try to make people* angry *about mass unemployment and Tory deception? No. The problem we now face is one of a general acceptance that mass unemployment is inevitable; the time for anger passed by three years ago. There is no point in fighting a campaign based on moral indignation unless people believe that there are solutions which are being rejected.*

'*Once we have shown that there are practical solutions, and give people hope,* then *the anger will follow. A dominant campaign image of anger will not win many to our cause. The general election campaign image, of the unemployed as a scrapheap, identified us with failure and confirmed the sense of despair we sought to dispel.*'

'Full' employment?

Accepting that the ground has shifted against the Labour Party:

- '*We should not promise too much too soon. In particular, the term "full employment" may now appear nebulous and overambitious. Instead, perhaps, we should talk in terms of new jobs and building industry for the future.*

John Smith — pusher and shover?

- *We should not focus our attack wholly on the Tories. People are turned off by political mud-slinging. Our appeal must begin by being good for* Britain.
- *We must appear relevant and modern. Our cloth cap image must be shed. "The future" must be a continual theme.*'

Polls evidence indicates that '*there is considerable support for many of Labour's policies taken individually.*' Government support to industry to help it bring in new technology is the most popular, although not significantly more popular than import controls and early retirement for men over 60.

'*Moreover*' [polls indicate] '*the groups whose votes Labour must win to be able to form a government identify strongly with particular themes:*

- *Labour defectors with — negotiation with other industrial countries to try to get the world economy growing*
- *Weak Alliance voters with — import controls*
- *Weak Conservative voters with — money to modernise traditional industries.*'

As to targeting specific groups, *Jobs and Industry Campaign* finds that women '*overwhelmingly believe that they should work if they want to, even though most think that a woman's first duty is to her family*'. The loss of Labour support among workers in the private sector means they too should be targeted.

Appeal to industry?

Polling evidence suggests that the campaign should '*stress the importance of co-operation in industrial relations*' (an anti-Scargill sub-text?) but the paper goes on to suggest that business interests might be won over on the basis of the campaign's emphasis on public investment in industry.

A party political broadcast is planned to centre round an interview with an industrialist '*giving a management view of why Labour's policies would be good for industry*'. The next suggestion follows logically:

'*Company donations need not be the sole province of the Tory party. It has been suggested that we contact all the Tory donors from this year's analysis of company donations (approx. 350 that we can find) and ask them for money on the "Support a Healthy Democracy: Fund Both Sides" argument. The New Zealand Labour Party plans to raise over £100,000 this year on this basis from industry.*'

In line with Labour policy to pretend the Alliance doesn't exist, and that no one can really be taken in by it, the paper devotes just one paragraph to asking tentatively whether the campaign should bother to attack the Liberals and the SDP. It suggests highlighting the division between Owen and Steel on the "social market" and emphasising their lack of ambition(?) and policies.

Finally, on page 45 the document discusses 'pre-publicity'. It says that the two main groups that should be alerted beforehand are journalists and active Labour Party members. '*For the latter, we can use* Labour Weekly, New Socialist *and the* New Statesman, *who can be asked to do straightforward reports on what is being planned*'

Happy to oblige. ●

LEAs 'siphon' £35m of Govt youth cash

LOCAL EDUCATION authorities (LEAs) are siphoning off money allocated by the Government for spending on the youth service. In the last financial year, 1982-3, 78 of the 96 English LEAs underspent by a total of £35m.

Since the 'youth riots' of 1981 in Brixton, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds, and other inter-city areas, the government has upped its assessment of how much needs to be spent on youth provision. Between 1981-82 and 1982-83 it increased the total GREA youth service figure by a staggering 50 per cent. But the LEAs only increased their spending by 12.9 per cent. The money allocated in the block grant for the youth service was spent on other areas.

Underspending in Birmingham last year was in the region of £3.3m; in Leeds £292,000; Manchester £281,000; Cheshire £1.1m; Hampshire and Lancashire £1.8m. By a savage irony, two of the LEAs that actually spent as much as the government said they should, ILEA and Liverpool, figure prominently on Patrick Jenkin's 'hit list' of overspending authorities.

The money allocated for the youth service without doubt finds its way into the general expenditure of LEAs. Faced with draconian spending cuts both Tory and Labour authorities are robbing the youth service in order that much needed cash can be saved for spending on school books and equipment.

Barry Hugill

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White-faced BNFL sends for rouge and eye-liner

BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS (BNFL), conscious of its poor public image, is planning to launch a major new public relations effort next year. It will include a large-scale advertising campaign targeted at women and the young, a special briefing for journalists, and greater attempts to influence MPs and trade unionists.

This emerges from an interview with BNFL's director of information services, Jeffrey Preece, in the latest edition of the company's in-house newspaper *BNFL News*. He reveals that, because of the bad publicity generated by the Yorkshire TV programme on cancers and the 'beach contamination incident' last year, BNFL is committed to taking a series of 'new PR initiatives' to 'restore public confidence in the company' — but adds that there's no point in beginning the new propaganda effort until the current public prosecution of BNFL over the beach contamination is 'well out of the way'.

BNFL is planning to take professional advice on whether its advertising campaign should try and 'get over very hard factual messages' or adopt 'the softer approach used by the oil companies to build up an image in the public's mind'. It will aim particularly at young people who are said to have succumbed to 'extreme anti-nuclear views' and women 'who seem to hold more anti-nuclear views than men, tending to be more worried about the effects of radiation on health'.

Preece discloses that, along with the two other stalwarts of the pro-nuclear power lobby — the UK Atomic Energy Authority and the Central Electricity Generating Board — BNFL is going to organise a special seminar for journalists to help persuade them 'to see nuclear topics in proper perspective'.

The company's past 'success' in lobbying politicians can be seen, he says, from the fact that BNFL's newsletter is now being quoted in MPs' speeches. One of the 50-strong Information Services Directorate works full-time lobbying MPs with the aid of specialist consultants. There is also a sustained attempt to influence trade unionists and party political activists, including a presence at many conferences (BNFL's regular reception for hand-picked delegates at Labour's annual conference has acquired a reputation amongst some activists as 'the best booze-up of conference'). These are areas where, according to Preece, 'we are doing a great deal and intend to do more'.

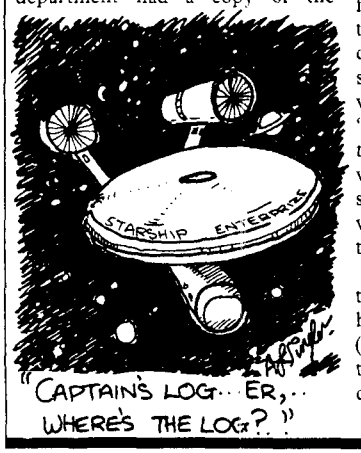
The interview ends with a reference to Ruth Balogh's recent article in *New Statesman* (14 September 1984) charting the overweaning influence of BNFL in the local community. 'It might have upset *New Statesman*, muses the irrepressible Preece, 'but it heartened me no end'.

Rob Edwards

Log-jam goes on and on

EVERY POSSIBLE device is being deployed to stall questions about the sinking of the *Belgrano* in the House of Commons.

But it seems clear that the crucial primary evidence about what actually did happen on the weekend of 1/2 May 1982 has conveniently been lost or destroyed. Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine, asked if his department had a copy of the destroyed signals log of the submarine *Conqueror*, replied: 'Not that we are aware.'



The log was destroyed in the 'period up to February 1983' says Heseltine (the *Conqueror* arrived back at its base, Faslane, in July 1982), 'under the authority of the Defence Council'. The Defence Council is a collection of big-wigs chaired by the Defence Secretary (then John Nott), including junior defence ministers, military chiefs of staff and the top Ministry of Defence civil servant.

A series of questions from Labour frontbencher George Foulkes has turned up the existence of new documents dealing with the sinking, such as the 'Flag Officer Submarines war diary', but it seems that these are 'edited highlights' drawn from the two logs which are now missing, and written up some time later. A further series of questions produced only 'I will answer shortly' or 'I will write to the hon. Gentleman'.

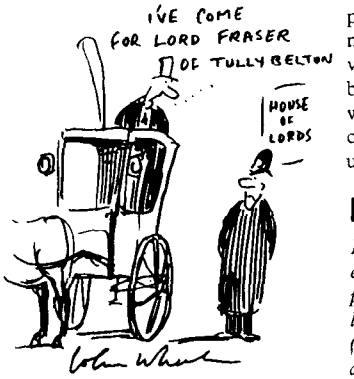
In the case of some of the questions that *have* been answered, the answers haven't been delivered until 10.30pm (answers are more usually given in the afternoon), too late for the next day's newspapers.

John Rentoul

MISCELLANY

Tired old phraser

Harold Stockton *ne* Macmillan may be the new darling of the Lords, but it seems his 'winds of change' have yet to reach his Law Lord colleagues. Lord Fraser of Tullybelton's main judgment last Thursday on the GCHQ appeal described GCHQ as a 'branch of the public service under the Foreign and Colonial Office'. The Colonial Office was abolished in the '60s. Commonwealth, Lord Fraser, Commonwealth.



Optional extras

Last week's courtesy call on British Telecom solicitors Slaughter & May by one of the NS *investigative cycling team (*Miscellany *23 November) has yielded up fascinating details of the home life of our own dear BT directors, with their 'job for life' contracts. Average salary is £59,000. Measly. But they each get a free phone (they may even get it* installed*). And there's a share option scheme for themselves and 200 top executives. This wheeze, legislated for by Thatcher, thoughtfully, in 1984, will permit them to buy BT shares three to ten years from now at the current (viz. from next Monday) price, to a maximum equivalent to four times their salary. The resulting figures sound like telephone numbers. eg if BT chairperson ('Pa Bell') Sir George Jefferson's salary were to wander up to £100,000 after privatisation (from its present £94,000) he'd be able to subscribe for £400,000 worth of options at today's, 1984, price. If the shares had only risen a derisory 20 per cent by 1987 (and they better had if privatisation isn't to get a dirty name even among its supporters) he'd still be able to cash them in for a tax-free £80,000 — worth £200,000 in taxed salary.*

Brittanic majesty

The security men charged with the minding of Her Majesty's cabinet have understandably been feeling a little jumpy since the Brighton bombing. And their edginess caused something of an embarrassment for a mechanic on a tree-felling job in the wilds of Yorkshire one recent Sunday morning. The mechanic in question had been called to fell a tree on the Wensleydale estate of Capt. H. Thornton Berry at the village of Swinithwaite, a few miles from Spennithorne where Home Secretary and Richmond (Yorks) MP Leon Brittan has his home. Commandeering the village bobby to stop the traffic lest the tree should fall across the road, the mechanic set about his task with the aid of a chain saw — only to be distracted minutes later by the arrival of a familiar looking black Daimler from which leaped two burly armed bodyguards who preceeded to scour the hedgerows for the perpetrators of the presumed ambush. 'The security men took it very seriously and it was very embarrassing for the policeman, but Mr Brittan just smiled and waved,' says the mechanic. In royal circles, it's known as keeping a stiff upper arm.

Ecological split

Not even the fledgling Ecology Party escapes the bitter divisions of Irish politics. At its convention in Kerry last month the Irish Green Alliance (Comhaontas Glas) passed a motion disowning the Northern Irish Ecology Party because its views on the constitutional crisis are 'diametrically opposed' to those of the Alliance and the British Ecology Party, which support consultations leading to a referendum. Desperately anxious not to interfere in the politics of Northern Ireland, the convention decided to discontinue the practise of directing enquiries from interested individuals to the Northern Irish party as it was 'essentially Unionist in outlook'.

Ana Gram nutters (8)

World scoop. Reader Davy Jones, who started this whole mess off with his poem about 'I knock Lenin' Neil Kinnock (*NS* 12 October), is a true prophet. Last weekend in Leningrad, Neil did just that: 'He quickly tired of the endless tributes to Lenin', the delighted *Daily Torygraph* recorded (26 November). My, you *NS* readers are top-flight analysts. Jones has come back into the fray with a new poem, alas too long to reproduce, for energy shadow Stan Orme, ending: '. . . but he could be "Mr no seat"/if the grass roots blow that way . . .' Like the wordsmiths who gave us Ken Livingstone last week ('Howdy young newt'), Davy Jones also gives us an entirely unsolicited Ian MacGregor: 'O grim carnage'. The 'Manchester Square wordsmiths' (come out, whoever you are) have sent, in the most elegant calligraphy, no less than 112 alphabetical reshuffles of Stan Orme. 'On stream' is neatest for the energy shadow. Gerard Morris of Teddington writes briskly: 'A monster'. Poor Stan, we knew him well, what has he done to deserve this? What have any of Labour's front bench done to deserve all this? In a Christmas spirit of reconciliation we offer you, for your kindly anagrammatical wits, Margaret Hilda Thatcher MP etc etc.

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PEACE PROTESTS ROLL CALL (9)

Total arrested to date in UK and Eire: 6,346

Arrests to date by location

Molesworth Peace Camp, Huntingdon **5**

5 & 14.11.84. 5 arrests when people attempted to prevent surveying work being carried out on the site.

The Alconbury 9 now have their committal date — 11 Dec. at Peterborough Mag. Court at 10am; the trial will last 3-5 days. Donations to help with fines and legal fees would be most welcome plus support on the day. Please send donations to 'The Alconbury 9 Defence Committee', 55 Hockley Close, Newtown, Birmingham.

Capenhurst Uranium Enrichment Plant, Cheshire

The result of the remaining 14 women to be tried for the 25 March action at the plant: only one woman found not guilty of obstructing a police officer. All had to pay £20 fine plus £50 compensation to British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL). On 7 Nov. at Cheshire Mags. Court 7 women were fined a total of £1090 for damage done 25 March at BNFL. £400 of this was compensation to BNFL which all the women feel morally unable to pay and would like to send this sum to SWAPO, the rightful leaders of Namibia, as an advance payment on the compensation that BNFL will eventually have to pay to them. The women are therefore appealing to peace groups and individuals to send donations to 'Capenhurst Women', c/o The Peace Shop, Leopold Street, Sheffield 7, to help with fines & costs.

2.11.84. 3 people arrested and charged with Obstruction of the Highway during the CANUC demonstration against the use of Namibian uranium. **3**

7.11.84. 2 arrests. Charged with Breach of Peace after placing Kreptonite locks on two gates and throwing away the keys. **2**

Hastings **4**

30.10.84. 4 arrested and charged with Wilful Obstruction of the Highway. Hearing at Hastings Magistrates on 29 Nov. The chairman of the bench granted police application for fingerprints to be taken — their reason being that groups such as peace groups should be 'readily identifiable in the future'.

St Albans, Herts. **2**

The two Greenham women who were arrested and charged with Wilful Obstruction of the Highway (sitting in front of Cecil Parkinson's Jaguar) were found not guilty at St Albans Magistrates Court on 13 Nov. The barrister defending the two women, Mary O'Dwyer, asked for court costs to be awarded to the women and the magistrates asked for £50 costs each to be paid. Mark Pendlington, Mr Parkinson's 'nanny' (agent), stated in a local press statement that 'All these women achieved was to prove that someone can nail placards to a private wall, block a main access door, try and prevent the public, a diplomat and an MP's entry & exit to that building . . . and for their trouble can gain the sympathy of a court and be recompensated from public funds for their costs!' . . . We don't win too often, Mr Pendlington, but when we do we win them well!

London, Whitehall Theatre of War

Five of the eight women who climbed the canopy of the Theatre of War on Hiroshima Day have been sentenced to an 18-month cond. disch. plus £280 compensation. The prosecution claimed for £1,700 damage to the building. The women have to pay £3 a week for 93 weeks or face 3/4 months in jail — anyone who feels they can help them pay off this cost is invited to send donations to Sally Wilson, 144 Caledonian Road, Islington, London N1.

Longmore RAF Camp, Nr Liss, Hants. **45**

15 & 16.11.84. 45 arrested trying to track cruise. 18 kept in a freezing muddy pit for two hours, including a 13-yr-old girl. All released without charge.

16.11.84. 2 Greenham women held at Portsmouth Station for several hours after being arrested at Longmore Camp — they were not allowed any phone calls and were released without a charge at 11.40 pm. **2**

Greenham Common USAF Base **Total to 20.9.84: 1903 to 22.11.84: 2013**

A total of 110 women have appeared on charges ranging from cr. damage/obstruction & 'Taking a motor coach without consent and allowing herself to be carried in the said conveyance' at Newbury Magistrates between 21 Sept. & 22 Nov. The majority of women will plead Not Guilty and attend court again in Jan/Feb. The 22 women who 'borrowed' a US bus and collected women at various points inside the US base and then drove to the inner perimeter fence which they proceeded to cut appeared at Newbury Mags. on 22 Nov. Many of the women were wearing badges which read: 'It's quicker by bus' . . . **110**

22.11.84. Sarah Hipperson was jailed for six weeks when she appeared at Newbury Mags on a cr. damages charge. Two other Greenham women were each sentenced to 14 days in prison when they refused to pay £50 fines.

Evicting the Greenham Women from their various camps each day has cost Newbury Council over £9,000 to end of September '84.

Please send new information to ***Janey Hulme*** *at the* New Statesman. *Further arrest details, for which we have no space here, will appear in later Rolls Calls.*

GEN. MEDICAL COUNCIL IN APARTHEID CRISIS

THE RIGHT of 22 universities in the 'old Commonwealth', including six in South Africa, to have their medical qualifications fully and immediately accepted in this country is under challenge within the General Medical Council (GMC).

In addition to the South Africans, there are ten universities in Australia with this special status, two in New Zealand and one each in Hong Kong, Singapore, West Indies and Malaya. Medical graduates from all other countries outside the EEC can come to Britain only on a limited registration — in effect a four-year trial period.

The special status of these universities in the eyes of the GMC has for long been contentious, and in particular South Africa's favoured treatment has been the subject of considerable debate. But the matter has been brought to a head by the emergence of an application from a seventh South African university for the same recognition.

This is Medunsa — the medical university of South Africa which was founded as an all-black institution in 1977. Critics of its being accorded privileged status, including Glasgow neurosurgeon and recently-elected GMC member Sam Galbraith, maintain that this would be a further major recognition of apartheid's legitimacy in the field of medical education.

AAM's opinion

Their opposition has been endorsed by the Anti-Apartheid Movement, whose chair, Aberdeen North MP Bob Hughes, wrote to Galbraith: 'The curriculum at Medunsa focuses in particular on training for work in rural areas which in other circumstances might be laudable but in South Africa means, in essence, training for the Bantustans.'

Medical education in South Africa, Hughes charges, is 'based on racial segregation and privilege — South Africa is trying to exclude Africans from all other university medical schools.' The GMC, confronted with concern on this score, has also been inquiring into the entrance criteria at the six other South African universities to which it already accords special treatment.

It transpires that Pretoria and Orange Free State are exclusively white; Natal entirely non-white, but accepting Indians and coloureds; Stellenbosch virtually all-white; Cape Town not accepting Africans; and Witwatersrand alone with a sprinkling of all races.

The GMC are likely to consider the Medunsa issue at their next meeting, but they'll also be looking at the whole, wider question of the special treatment for all of these 22 'old Commonwealth' universities. Galbraith again: 'A lot of people think that everyone should be on the same footing, and that *all* doctors coming to this country should undergo a four-year trial period.'

Brian Wilson

Remanded for 4½ years

NORTHERN Ireland's longest serving remand prisoner Tommy Power, who has been implicated on the word of five different 'supergrasses' and has already spent two years and ten months behind bars, is expecting to serve at least four and a half years in prison before he comes to trial after his fifth High Court bail application was turned down last week — despite the claim by relatives that eleven Loyalist defendants on similar charges were granted bail.

Tommy Power, 31, was first arrested on 5 February, 1982 on a charge of conspiracy to cause explosions after being implicated by two 'supergrasses', John McConkey and Robert McAllister. Both men retracted their testimony six weeks later claiming the RUC had pressurised them to sign false statements. But as Tommy Power walked free from the remand hearing he was re-arrested on the word of another two 'supergrasses', Jackie Goodman and John Grimley, and charged with conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

After 18 months in Belfast's Crumlin Rd Jail, half the case against him collapsed when Goodman retracted his evidence, leaving only the unreliable testimony of Grimley, a known sex offender and three times British army deserter. The Grimley trial date was finally set for November 1983 but in August Tommy Power was taken to Castlereagh interrogation centre for four hours and charged again on the word of another 'supergrass', Harry Kirkpatrick, a self-confessed six-times murderer, on a different set of far more serious charges.

Power now faces another two years in jail awaiting the outcone of the Kirkpatrick trial — set for late 1985 and expected to last nine months. His five bail applications before the Belfast High Court having failed.

The injustice of Power's predicament has angered his parents who claim that 11 Loyalist defendants charged with murder have been allowed bail including Mervyn Moore who has since fled to the Irish Republic.

Kevin Toolis

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PETER KELLNER

How to blacken the character of the Left

IS LABOUR beginning to take racial equality seriously? There will be those who jib at 'beginning', for it has been the party's policy since — well, since forever — to promote equality, and the Race Relations Act testifies to the commitment of the last Labour government. Yet by every index — the level of unemployment, the pay levels of blacks who do have jobs, the council homes they are allocated even (especially) by Labour councils, the uncontested Policy Studies Institute evidence of the way they are treated by the police, and so on — discrimination remains a deeply ingrained feature of everyday life.

It would be something if the Labour Party itself could claim to have set a good example but it cannot. There are no black MPs, no black party officials at senior level, and even this autumn, when the debate on black sections at Blackpool produced the best exposition of rival views to be heard all week, very few black delegates to the party's annual conference.

So if things are now stirring in the party's undergrowth, 'beginning' is wholly appropriate. A black candidate has been chosen to fight the Southgate by-election — not, admittedly, the most attractive constituency for the people's party, but by-elections attract national publicity, so the event is of some significance. This week, the GLC appointed the black deputy leader of Brent Council, Merle Amory, as an equal opportunity adviser in its contract compliance unit. The unit's purpose is to make sure that private contractors supplying the GLC are themselves equal opportunity employers.

Ms Amory's appointment is part of what may turn out to be the GLC's most enduring monument: its attempt to apply the theory of equal opportunity in practice. Not only is it attempting to take the argument a stage further by demonstrating that equal opportunities can work — as opposed to being merely a comforting theory for white middle-class liberals — it is also confronting one of the most awkward of all obstacles to equality: the attitudes of the trade unions.

One black union official made the harsh but relevant point recently during a discussion with Michael Ward, who chairs the GLC's employment committee, about the council's contract compliance plans: 'The day you withdraw a contract from a male, white, *unionised* company will be the day the shit hits the fan'.

When (if) that day comes, Ms Amory will doubtless draw on all her — how can I put this? — *varied* experience of political life in Brent to handle the electrified excrement. Meanwhile, the GLC has provided evidence that ought to frighten every member of the labour movement about the present attitudes of the unions to racial equality. This week a GLC working group has published a report *Racism within Trade Unions**. It reports the findings of a survey of unions' policies to combat racism in their own organisations.

In order to qualify as a GLC activity, the survey is confined to unions with head offices in London; so it excludes, for example, the miners' unions (based in Sheffield) and the shopworkers (Manchester). Some unions refused to take part. The electricians' union, for example, replied that it only participated in surveys conducted or authorised by the TUC itself. Other unions did not reply at all. Even so, enough unions, including most of the major ones, did co-operate.

THE SURVEY covered two broad issues: equality (or lack of it) among the membership of unions; and the record of unions as employers. The answers of my own union, the National Union of Journalists, give a flavour of the evidence. The NUJ is one of the better unions; but that is a relative term demonstrating mainly how bad the average is. Asked 'Is there any information collected on the ethnic breakdown on your union's membership?', the NUJ replied: 'No information so far; we are in the process of devising a questionnaire to establish how many "black" members we have.'

Asked whether there was any information on the ethnic breakdown of the union's own employees, the NUJ wrote back with a reply typical of other unions: 'No — but all job adverts state that the NUJ is an equal opportunities employer.' The union, however, went on to offer a more encouraging morsel to the GLC's researchers: 'We have a significant number of black employees — about 20 per cent.' This point was taken up in interview. According to the report, 'all the black workers, said the interviewee upon reflection, hold lowly clerical jobs with little chance of promotion'. (And, before you ask, the *New Statesman* has one black employee, in a clerical job.)

The report provides a series of examples of unions having adopted racial equality policies at national conferences, but then acted half-heartedly, if at all, to implement them. On the question of monitoring the composition of its own staff, NUPE admitted in its written reply: 'Union nationally committed to monitoring in principle, but not implemented for itself. Looking at it now.' On monitoring the membership as a whole, NALGO responded: 'Despite a commitment to monitoring it has not been implemented.'

Two years ago ASTMS's conference instructed its executive 'to ensure that ASTMS itself adopts a model equal opportunities policy, including the introduction of positive action to improve the position of ethnic minorities within the union . . . if a thorough monitoring of the ethnic composition of union members and employees indicates significant racial disadvantages.' ASTMS told the GLC that this had not been implemented.

On figures for the membership as a whole the union (like the general and municipal workers) mentioned difficulties with their system of branch returns; and to the question of whether ASTMS was monitoring its own staff, the union responded: 'Not as yet. This is currently under discussion between the APEX staff and ASTMS Officials Joint Negotiating Committee.'

Other unions, like the bakers, have not even accepted the principle of monitoring the membership or staff. The National Union of Teachers acknowledged that its working party on multi-ethnic education asked for the union's membership to be monitored, 'but the membership committee refused'.

Ten years ago a refusal to monitor either the membership or staff of a union would have been ideologically 'correct': the class struggle knew no race barriers, and to devote energy to detecting inequality would be at best a distraction and at worst a tactic dividing the working class. That argument no longer holds as much sway as it did. Increasingly, monitoring has been used to illuminate the systematic, indirect discrimination that continues to take place, most dramatically in council home lets: it is not simply a matter of sacking the occasional racist official, but of understanding the implications of apparently non-racist letting procedures (like giving extra points to those people — normally white — who have lived in the area the longest).

When Labour took control of the GLC in 1981, it started monitoring the ethnic balance of its own employees. Not surprisingly, there were found to be too few blacks. On further examination, one of the principal reasons was the practice of advertising internally; this tended to perpetuate the existing imbalance and meant — as in the civil service — that the most senior appointments went to people who had joined the GLC, or its predecessor the LCC, 20 to 30 years ago. By opening up its own recruitment practices, and monitoring the results, the number of blacks employed by the GLC has risen by a third in three years.

The GLC, as both God and Ken Livingstone know, is far from perfect; but its efforts to practice racial equality are enough on their own to make the fight to save the council worthwhile. □

**Available free from the GLC, County Hall, London SE1. Individual copies from the Bookshop, Room 82; bulk supplies from Gareth Lewis, Room 7.*

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CHANGING IDEAS OF AUTHORITY

Lynne Jones wonders whether fear of nuclear devastation is the best basis for a peace movement: 'There's something paradoxical about terrifying people and then expecting them to challenge a government armed with that kind of might'

WE ARE lying 10 yards from the silos. An owl swoops over us, wings caught in the headlights of a passing car. We have crawled, run, walked across the runway and through woods to get here and are now waiting for the evening rush of traffic to diminish before running through the last brightly lit area, in an attempt to get over the inner fence. Groups of women have been doing this every night. On one occasion 21 hijacked an airforce bus, drove up to the inner silo fence and started cutting before being arrested. The actions continue in spite of the fact that the camp is under the worst pressure for months. Evictions occur sometimes twice a day — they aren't pleasant. The bailiffs on one occasion emptied the Elsan on the ground before taking it. The water standpipe has been taken and the Water Board, having decided we are 'illegal', has refused to replace it.

I am soaked to the skin and covered in mud, my coat was lost crawling through the first lot of wire. There are three rabbits hopping about in front of my nose. The traffic seems endless. Why am I doing this? The media aren't interested, haven't been for months. Am I wasting my time?

○

But how do we define effective action? Greenham has long stopped being a publicity exercise. The actions over the last year — the occupation of the air traffic control tower, the perpetual incursions and blockades, the removal of sections of fence and documents from inside the base — have changed from mass symbolic set pieces to a form of perpetual resistance; the nearest non-violence can get to guerrilla warfare.

They have not lost their symbolic value. On Nagasaki Day the women stripped naked, covered the ground and themselves with ashes and then blockaded. But they have far more to do with preventing those who run the base operating efficiently than with publicity seeking. In this it would appear that we are being effective. A friend visiting the USAF Commander recently remarked that his desk was covered in newspaper cuttings about the camp. The Defence Committee Hearing at Greenham on physical security last May was entirely preoccupied with the camp.

Not that their discussion showed much understanding of our psychology. Defence Minister Keith Speed suggested that an extremely dull 10ft high wall with TV surveillance on top should be built. Having nothing to watch we would get bored and go away. Mr Ward (head of S.I.) did point out that this would appear to be 'walling in the Americans and thus provide the peace camp with a sort of victory. So far as is possible we would like Greenham not to become so much like a prison camp that it resembled no other American Airforce base in this country.'

Meanwhile the tracking of the cruise convoy has become increasingly efficient. So far there has been no secret dispersal at all, while on the last exercise five peace activists in a van actually joined the convoy for a period. Wing Commander March admitted to Evelyn Parker of Newbury Campaign Against Missiles that the convoys had to travel at 'indecent haste' whereas 'under normal circumstances'(!) this would not be necessary.

○

The MoD spent £8¾ million on overtime last year — £6 million of that on demonstrations. Far from occupying a few troublemakers the ten-day action in September demonstrated the power of the camp to attract thousands of new women from as far away as New Zealand and the USA, and as Liz pointed out, 'Women who live here any length of time simply don't go back to being housewives'. Greenham for many is their first contact with organised violence in the form of dogs, army, police, soldiers and barbed wire — it is unforgettable. 'They see women being arrested on quite trivial charges while significant laws such as the Genocide Act are ignored. It completely changes your attitude to authority.'

Few women pass through the camp without deciding that cruise missiles are just one particular and frightening manifestation of our complete lack of self-determination. So that it seems completely natural to move from here to campaigns against Violence against Women; support for Nicaragua, Namibia, or miners' picket lines. Some sections of the peace movement see all this diversity as diluting the real issue of nuclear weapons. And it can't be denied that, while we find it easy to see and explain the connections between these issues, working in more than one place at once is difficult.

Sarah Hipperson writing in a recent issue of *Women for Life on Earth* described her disappointment at the fact that thousands of women don't come to the camp to obstruct the cruise convoys on their return. 'I remember raging bitterly that Greenham women may be everywhere but they certainly aren't on Greenham Common while this "beast" is out travelling through our country preparing for mass murder. . . If a thousand women came to Greenham to "picket" think how stretched the police would be looking after all the pickets in the country. Indeed if this was done once a week that would be a practical as well as political promotion of non-violence to strengthen and solidify it.' However connections work both ways and making them has brought other women to Greenham — black women, miners' wives.

○

The strangest thing is that I am not scared. Gathering with other women outside the fence in the dusk I was terrified: images of myself shot, caught on barbed wire, beaten up by soldiers or bitten by Alsation dogs, flickering on the edge of my mind. They have cleared now and lying in the mud beside Hera and Skippy, women I love and trust, I feel quite safe, intent only on how we might get over that fence, and what has happened to the other women. Those who worry that the camp has lost its sense of direction by using its energy to maintain a women's community, rather than challenge cruise, miss the point that the only possibility of an effective challenge comes out of creating that community.

○

That's not to say we have Utopia. I can't think of a more insane place to try and create it than on a public highway outside a barbed wire fence with no shelter worth its name. We have had

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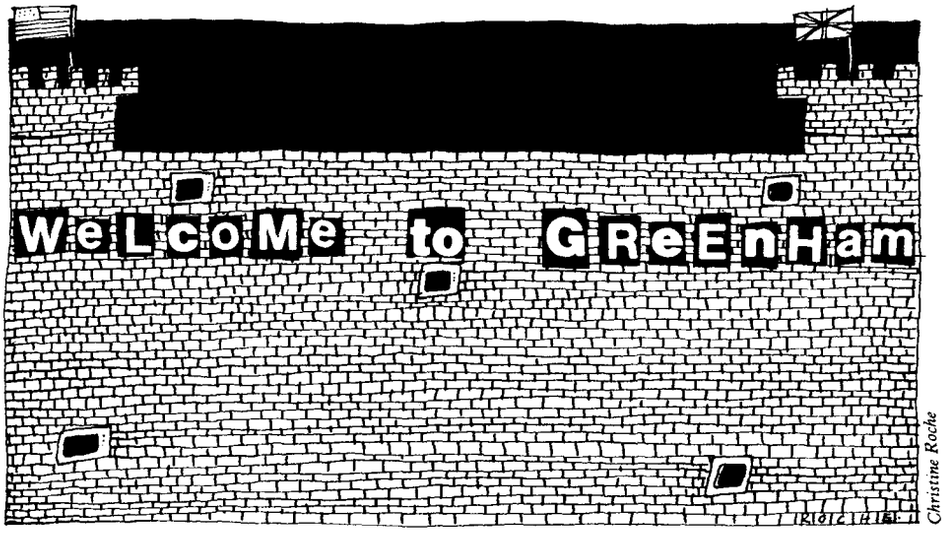

Christine Roche

bitter quarrels over the use of money, the ability to act as we choose without limiting others' freedom to do likewise. We have seen women come here mad with distress, and have failed utterly to help them, and then ourselves left in disgust. . .and come back again, because somehow the centre holds — a shared belief that even if we can't live up to our own ideals the effort is worth it.

Sometimes it works — over the ten days' action, workshops were held, shit pits dug, litter collected and countless actions taken with no sense of a central leadership. When the evictions began in earnest again several weeks ago, women appeared miraculously with hot food; water is dropped off by total strangers at least twice a day. There isn't a short cut. If getting rid of cruise means abandoning the attempt to look after each other it isn't worth doing.

○

The traffic has lessened, it seems quiet. We get up and start to run towards the wire. A soldier appears from behind an observation box. Another appears 100 yards away down the fence. 'Stop running', he yells. We put our hands up, smiling and walk towards him. He looks incredibly young and scared. Fifteen soldiers anxiously gather around seven women and push us into a LandRover. We're driven to the administration block and taken out one by one to be searched. It's interesting to see how neatly the services mesh together. Cathy, plump and blond in silky blue bomber jacket (USAF), is acting tough with Skippy — 'Siddown or I'll sidya down'. Sarah is pacing up and down while a nervous RAF man follows her with an exasperated expression on his face. 'Sit down!' he says in desperation. 'You're working for death' she replies, 'and I'm not doing anything you say!'

Cathy calls for help and a large MoD policeman arrives. 'Look Miss Green, you know the form, sit down, please'. (There are no chairs and the only reason I am sitting on a very cold floor is to write notes.)

'You know the form — you're preparing for murder! Why have you made that woman sit alone?'

'Because I fancy her and I don't fancy you!'

Another MoD officer arrives, glances at her and at the series of open doors — 'Can I have those doors locked please!' Last time Sarah was here she removed lecture notes discussing the operational deficiencies in the running of the base and its preparedness for chemical and biological warfare.

'Didn't I tell ya it was goin' to be one of those nights?', Cathy remarks to no one in particular.

'It will be "one of those nights" every night until you get rid of cruise', Sarah retorts.

○

There's much discussion in the peace movement as a whole on the need for new ways of thinking; a growing realisation that fear of the effects of nuclear weapons is not the best basis for action. Indeed there's something paradoxical about first terrifying people and then expecting them to be brave enough to challenge a government armed with that kind of might.

So we are discussing realistic alternatives. The only problem for me is that many of the new alternatives seem remarkedly like the old. I am no less terrified by the prospect of conventional warfare, however defensive. While we remain in a society whose organising principles are violence and exploitation, the lesser of two evils is still evil.

Yet pacifism is not discussed; it is seen as a form of 'weakness' or 'giving in' and everyone is still frightened. If Greenham stands for anything it is to challenge that. 'Non-violent action', Liz remarked to me one day, 'is simply a way of overcoming fear of one sort or another'. I see the continuing existence of the peace camp as a constant reminder of the possibility of non-violence as a creative struggle that doesn't have to end in defeat. For three years a small bunch of women have successfully held onto a patch of land in the face of a government with all the coercive powers of the State at its disposal and at the same time they have created a network and philosophy of personal responsibility that stretches across the world.

○

They haven't changed us and we are released in twos, walking past the security box and through a gate that divides two realities — ours which says that conflicts can be resolved without violence and theirs, where the presence of violence prevents anything being resolved at all. □

EDUCATION

CLOSED BOOK ON READING

Starved of funds and morale, some teachers are looking outside the school to private institutions to provide the specialist help with reading difficulties that is beyond them. Barry Hugill reports

THE DYSLEXIA Institute is spearheading a campaign to 'privatise' the teaching of reading to children who experience learning difficulties. The Institute is acting not out of any ideological commitment to free enterprise but out of despair at what it believes to be the indifference of local education authorities to dyslexic children. Its efforts are being supplemented by a mobile classroom run by Defining Dyslexia, an independent group of parents.

For years educationists have argued over the word itself. The majority of education psychologists argue that there is no such condition as 'dyslexia' but rather a series of learning difficulties which vary from child to child and which cannot be clinically diagnosed. But a leading neurologist, Dr William Goody, says that there are clear symptoms of a specific disability called dyslexia, the most obvious of which are the inability to translate letters into meaningful spoken words or to translate what is heard into writing. Another almost invariable symptom is a confusion between left and right, difficulty in telling the time and tying shoe laces. Left-handed people are much more likely to be dyslexic than right handers and, believes Dr Goody, there is evidence that it is a congenital condition.

The files of the Dyslexia Institute are bulging with cases of schoolchildren classified as 'remedial' by their teachers who have learnt to read and write after specialist help from the Institute. Dennis Gatehouse, a young hotel worker, is fairly typical. He tells of primary school teachers who decided he was 'a slow learner'; secondary school teachers who placed him in a remedial stream where he mixed with 'trouble-makers'; and an educational psychologist who convinced him that he was a 'head case'. It was not until he was 16 that a sympathetic teacher had decided that he was dyslexic and convinced him that he was not mentally disturbed. Five years later he 'got enough courage to phone the Dyslexia Institute and since then I have never looked back'.

Britain's two best known dyslexics, Olympic swimming champion Duncan Goodhew and actress Susan Hampshire, both recount years of agony at school where teachers denounced them as 'dunces'. Ms Hampshire attacks teachers who refuse to accept that dyslexia exists, claiming that they cause untold damage to thousands of children who 'suffer nightmares a result of the treatment they receive at school'.

Out of over 600,000 five-year-olds at school in England, the Dyslexia Institute estimates that

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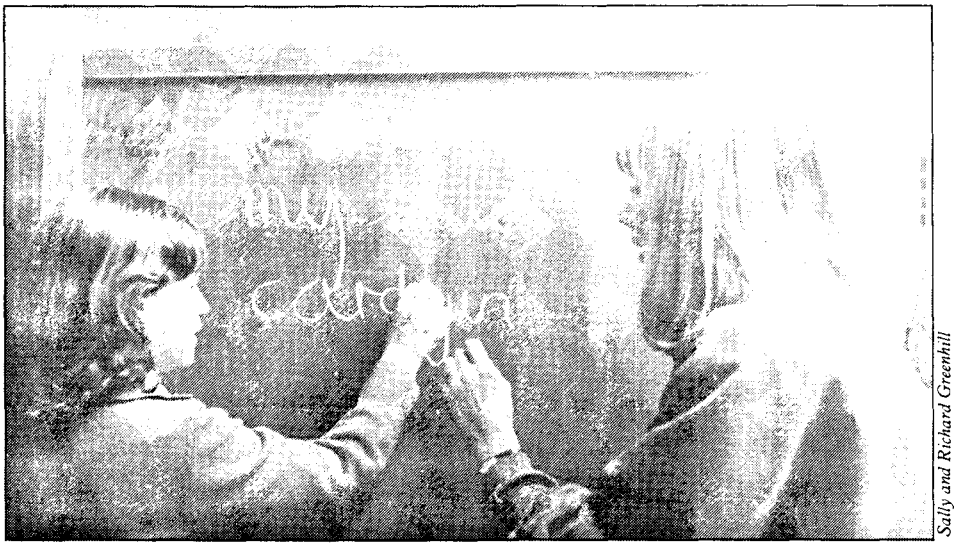

Sally and Richard Greenhill

Actress Susan Hampshire (herself dyslexic) with a dyslexic child

25,000 will eventually leave school unable to read or write because of dyslexia. But in the absence of any guidelines from the Department of Education and Science on how to deal with the condition, the Institute claims that it is the only body able to offer assistance to sufferers and their parents.

CRITICS OF the Institute believe that use of the term 'dyslexic' is psychologically and socially important to middle-class parents whose children have reading and/or spelling difficulties. Such parents are invariably aware that every piece of research since research was invented has shown that the crucial factor in learning to read is parental encouragement. Classifying their child as dyslexic enables them to explain that the difficulty experienced by the child is clinical and not the result of parental neglect.

Critics also believe that use of the blanket term 'dyslexia' creates a simplistic approach to what are really a myriad of learning difficulties. Some, especially those on the Left, argue that many children are 'slow developers' because of social disadvantage. Clinical diagnosis of a pseudo-disease is no substitute for extra spending on schools, greater involvement of parents in the education their children, and smaller classes so that children who need special attention can get it, they say.

A more sophisticated critique is now fashionable among the HMI, the official watchdogs over the school curriculum. In a major document published at the start of the autumn term ('English from 5-16: Curriculum matters 1', HMSO, £1.50) they attack 'structural' approaches to the teaching of reading. They are especially critical of much remedial reading which they see as too narrowly focused and obsessed with subsets of skills and phonics, the sounds of language. Phonics and a highly structured approach to specific reading skills form the backbone of the Dyslexia Institute approach.

The HMI say that a relatively small percentage of the school population — between 5 and 10 per cent — leaves school at 16 functionally illiterate. They are more concerned with those who are literate but classified as below average ability. A return to the old-fashioned, laborious and, in the view of the HMI, boring approach to the teaching of reading will not, they argue, help these children. Rather, the principles of learning how to read should apply across the curriculum, making the content of a child's reading as important as the process of reading. They are understood, perhaps surprisingly, to have the sympathy of the Secretary of State for Education, Sir Keith Joseph.

This view is probably shared by the majority of reading specialists. One senior adviser with a London borough offered me several reasons why children don't learn to read. The most obvious, and easiest to cope with once diagnosed, are medical — poor hearing or vision. More difficult to cope with is prolonged absence from school and, most difficult of all, a psychological inability to listen. In lieu of a medical problem, motivation, she says, is the crucial factor. Thus she and many education authorities (LEAs) are setting up schemes for involving parents and children in the teaching process — an approach which seems to pay high dividends.

SINCE THE START of the post-war period, there have been three major approaches to the teaching of reading. Excluding 'ita', the initial teaching alphabet which was never widely used, readers over 30 will remember the phonic approach of the '50s, c..a..t spells cat. That yielded to the 'look and say' flashcard methods of the '60s, in turn superseded in the '70s by 'reading for meaning'.

In an influential book, *Learning to Read*, Margaret Meek of the London University Institute of Education, says of illiterates that 'it is not that they have not been taught which is the prime cause of their failure but that for too many they have been too well taught phonically and therefore can only decode'. The code is units of sound, and given the idiosyncrasies of English spelling, this can prove disastrous.

The prevailing 'reading for meaning' approach emphasises everything involved in reading, not just subsets of sounds or letters. Thus, reading books should make use of the child's own experience (increasingly quite alien from the comfortable, white middle class world of Janet and John). Teachers should know from the start, says Ms Meek, what reading, if any, the child has already done at home. They must use books with a 'proper' story and which will allow the child to guess what might happen.

This should not become a new dogma, excluding other approaches, such as the use of phonics, or of small-group 'remedial' teaching, where helpful. But there is the problem of human resources, continuously made worse by the cuts. A pupil-teacher ratio of 1:25 is usually acceptable to teachers, 1:20 is better, and much lower is some cases. But in many city schools 1:40 is common.

Already there is a trend towards making remedial teachers take over full classes and there is a danger that the HMI report, with its criticism of the existing sorts of specialist teaching, will be used to justify axing any special attention to reading as a process.

The Dyslexia Institute, in despair at modern methods and convinced that most LEAs are unsympathetic to the needs of a significant minority of children, has drawn the disturbing conclusion that privatisation may be the answer. Last month Tory MP Tim Eggar launched Dyslexia Week with an attack on the LEAs for their attitude to children needing specialist education, and criticised the HMI and the DES body responsible for teacher education (ACSET) for recommending that specialist qualifications be abolished. The private sector and voluntary sector can do more for children with reading difficulties than LEAs, he asserted.

And a growing body of teachers in State schools are agreeing with him. In Hertfordshire headteachers have the 'discretion' to invite in Dyslexia Institute staff if they wish. Elsewhere teachers are recommending anxious parents to go to the Institute for advice and sometimes tuition. The Dyslexia Institute is a highly reputable organisation with no interest other than assisting children with reading and writing difficulties. It receives no government funding. The fees it charges are, in the world of private tuition, quite modest at £8 an hour, and all its teachers are fully trained. It would be tragic if it were to become a tool in the hands of right-wing politicians hell-bent on hiving off part of the education service and washing their hands of the consequences of a starved public education sector. □

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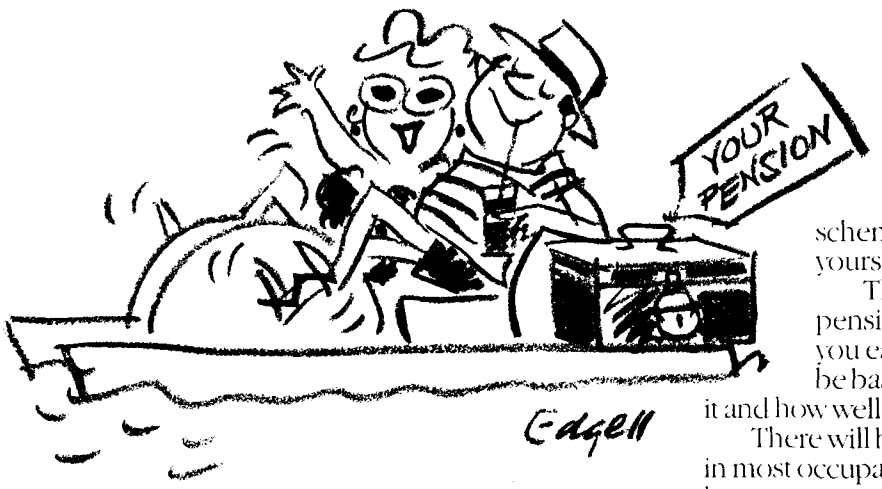

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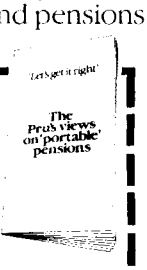

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MINERS' STRIKE

SISTER, BROTHER AND TWIN

John Rose on personal support for mining families

IN THE comforting pale of the south east of England, where no miner penetrates unless he is contained in a television box, the extent of support for the strike has been a discomfiting and incomprehensible fact. How and why have so many people who had never been in a mining village felt joined in this nine-month-old conflict?

It has been more than an act of ideological solidarity. The strike has introduced 'twinning' (an appropriately family notion) to thousands of people who would otherwise have no direct contact with the communities who are actually conducting the strike. Many pits are now 'twinned' with workplaces and colleges which raise money, food, clothing and toys for them. Although this creates a problem of the fair distribution of support with pits which aren't twinned or whose twins are less able to raise money, it has nonetheless become a cement binding together strikers and supporters across the country.

Dave Donovan thinks so anyway. For the last nine weeks he has been hard at work in London hooking up the Neath, Dulais and Swansea valleys (four pits, 1100 miners) in South Wales with dozens of funding partners. His diary is packed with appointments with shop stewards in light engineering factories in West London, schoolteacher union representatives, town hall visits, individual Labour Party ward meetings, a North London Turkish community association (which is planning to lay on a grand-scale shish kebab supper in the valleys) and a gay and lesbian group.

Dave has official permission from the South Wales NUM to collect in this way. The area union recognised the importance of twinning early on as an obvious response to sequestration. (Its funds were sequestrated in the summer). Funds can go directly to the pits and communities in need, from giver to receiver without the official machinery of the union being involved.

But Dave argues that twinning has an even greater significance. He says: 'It brings the strike alive for people. It frees it from the media. Workers know exactly who their cash, food is going to. Then we can invite our new found friends and supporters to come and visit our homes and communities. In no time at all you become an ambassador for the strike.

'A COACH FULL of town hall employees came to visit us. But the driver of the coach was hostile to the strike. He wanted to sleep on his coach. But we persuaded him to change his mind. Twenty-four hours with a miner's family turned him into a convinced supporter of the strike. He was putting money in the food fund and giving advice on hiring the cheapest coaches to get miners to rallies. There were tears in his eyes.'

This sense of emotional and intellectual upheaval has been experienced by many visitors to their twinned pit communities. David Wilson, an English lecturer at the Kilburn Polytechnic in London, described the impact on himself and his colleagues.

'Within minutes of our arrival, miners' families were insisting that we take the keys to their front doors. Their children, against our wishes, needless to say, were ushered out of their bedrooms to make way for us and to our amazement and embarrassment, proper meals were laid on. This heady combination of hardship, struggle and generosity had rekindled the socialist spirits in the most depressed of us! Come what may we must not let these miners down.'

The visit of the lecturers coincided with a visit by the twinned gay and lesbian group. David Wilson says, 'I must admit we were a bit apprehensive about how they would be received. But at the welfare social club on the Saturday night they got a fantastic reception. Of course, there were one or two doubting Thomases, but they were quickly dealt with. A miner's wife at one table tore a strip off a miner who complained about the visit. She told him, in no uncertain terms, that peoples' sex lives were their own business. The whole table supported her!'

DAVE DONOVAN reckons twinning is bringing in an extra £2,000 a week. This makes these valleys among the best fed in South Wales. 'This gives us a special responsibility', he says. 'We have to search out the poorer pits and communities that have not twinned successfully and both share with them and show them how to go out themselves and raise money.'

This last point answers the unease expressed by some of the miners' leaders that twinning can lead to fragmentation of support and even set one pit in competition with another. Peter Heathfield has expressed such doubts recently. But Bobby Buttle, at the Women's Action Group, in Bentley, near Doncaster, has none. She says simply, 'we wouldn't have survived without it.'

Bentley is twinned with NALGO members at Camden Town Hall. And through the money raised there the Bentley women are able to feed 700 miners a week. They are also now trying to use their relatively well organised kitchen to come to the aid of poorer, outlying areas.

The Camden end is very well organised. There are collection co-ordinators in most sections to make sure the collections are done weekly. Obviously not everyone gives the same amount each week. Doubt can easily set in, registered in a fall in the collection. So the collectors are organised into their own support committee which runs weekly open meetings. These meetings discuss and re-discuss all the arguments surrounding the strike. The support committee has also organised regular trips to South Yorkshire for anyone who wants to go.

A GREAT chunk of a 'Right of Reply' Special tabloid newspaper produced for the TUC and reprinted this month by printworkers and (some) journalists at the *Sun* and *News of the World* chapels is also devoted to the pit they have twinned with at Birch Coppice in Warwickshire. The striking miners at this pit certainly needed such a boost. There were just 160 of them out of a total of 850. They have been banned from any public presence in the nearest town of Tamworth by the Tory controlled council. Even collections for the miners' children are banned because, according to deputy mayor Sam Munn, 'the money could be used to buy guns to shoot the police.'

'You can imagine our feelings' says Terry Aherne, branch secretary at the colliery, 'when the lads from Fleet Street came. . .in a four ton truck full of food.'

The need to 'twin' reflects the difficulties the unions are having nationally raising sufficient support from their members. The activists, both miners and non-miners, have sensed this and have sought each other out. How about a national campaign to twin every striking pit or group of pits before Christmas? There is still an enormous fund of goodwill which, with effort, can translate into hard cash. But it needs to be organised fast. □

Raissa Page/Format

Pat (centre) from Bentley Women's Action Group with her 'twins' from Camden, in the miners' welfare club

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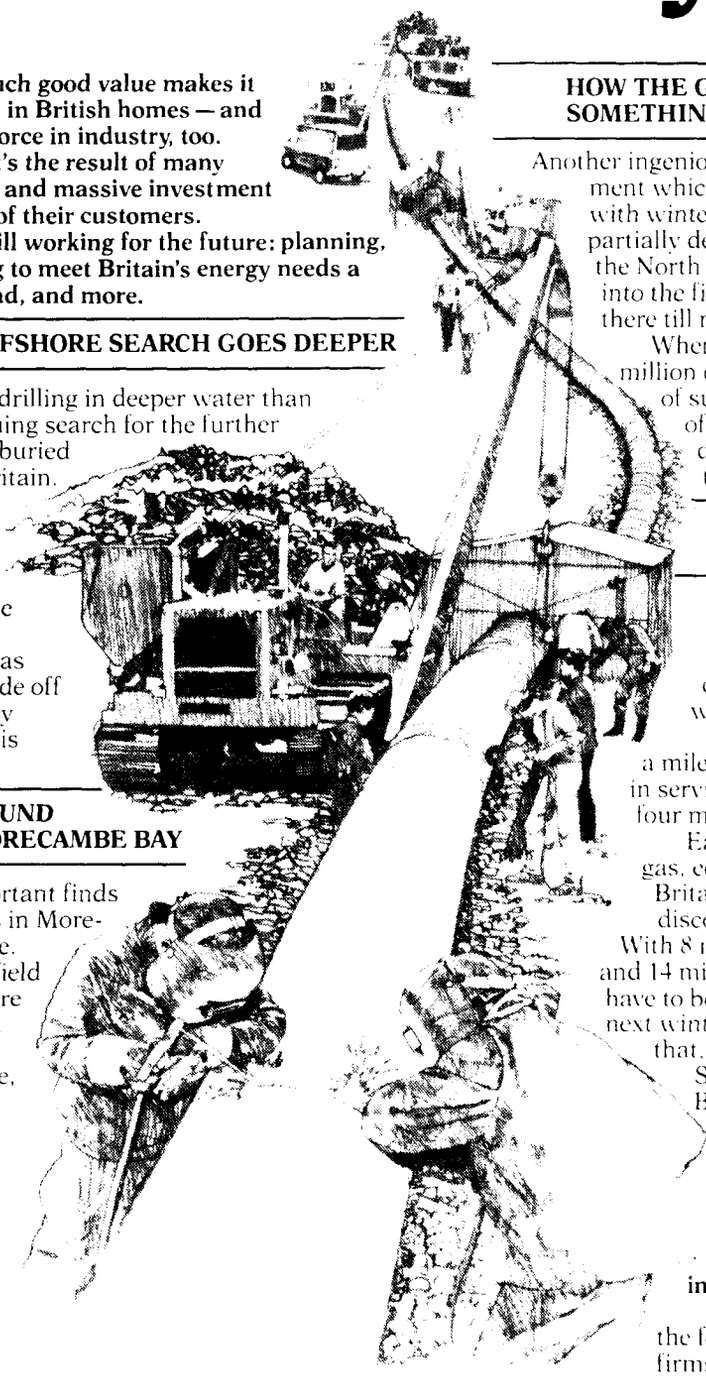

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THE LEFT RE-ALIGNS

With a volatile Communist Party hovering on the edge of a split, Sarah Benton looks at the new groupings of the Left

THE UNHAPPY marriage of the Communist Party's 'hard' and 'soft' wings took one step nearer dissolution last weekend when the biennial Congress of its London District broke up in disarray with no district committee elected and no policy debated. While the party's leadership is expected to call its third emergency Executive Committee in two months this weekend, the 'hardliners' are expected to try to summon a Special National Congress, using the *Morning Star* to rally and direct support.

The situation is now so volatile that any initiative from either side is likely to cause repercussions — reaching far into the rest of the Left — over which no one section of the Communist Party will have control. Although, politically, the final separation of what are in effect two communist parties could take place tomorrow, there is the matter of the joint property to settle. The fundamentalist wing does not wish to abandon the historic name or notable assets of the party to the current centre/ eurocommunist leadership — who do not want to relinquish their claim to the title and slightly less notable assets of the *Morning Star*.

This latest division is a product of the fine balance between the fundamentalists and broad Left in London district. The Communist Party is divided into 16 districts which have their biennial Congresses this November. They elect committees (DCs) which meet monthly and operate the next level of authority below the National Executive Committee (EC). They are therefore a keenly contested site for winning political power. Of the districts, East Midlands and West Middlesex are controlled by the fundamentalists, who also won the North West but lost the Northern district. The broad Left dominates most of the others, including the major committees of Scotland (covering a quarter of the party's membership), Yorkshire, the Midlands and West of England.

London however is the most evenly and bitterly divided. Conflict in the capital has been more sharply polarised then elsewhere not least because its leadership has been one of the weakest and because the geographic presence of the *Morning Star* and *Marxism Today* have provided convenient poles to organise around. In other areas, the involvement of the districts in a larger working-class membership and pressing local campaigns have slightly defused the tensions.

It was after receiving complaints of fiddling to get hardline delegates from Hackney elected as Congress delegates that the party leadership decided to intervene directly. Following an emergency EC last Friday, General Secretary Gordon McLennan told the London Congress the next morning that their voting rights to elect a new DC had been invalidated. The hardliners appeared to be taken by surprise by the uncharacteristic speed and firmness of the EC's action. After two stormy hours of debate, McLennan led a walkout from the Congress of the broad Left and the hardline faction associated with *Straight Left* magazine, who feared the leadership was trying to provoke them into a split.

The rest of the hardliners stayed behind to pass a motion condemning the EC and threatening to use their powers under rule to summon a Special National Congress at which they would hope to win political power and, probably, go on to expel their opposition. A special Congress can be called by one fifth of the branches or one third of the DCs.

THE POTENTIAL split within the Communist Party is no longer confined to an esoteric internal dispute between the factions of a fast dwindling organisation. Up until the mid '70s the unbridgeable divide within the Marxist Left was between Trotskyists, based in a rapidly proliferating series of groups, and Communists (monolithically Stalinist, according to their opponents). Their only common ground was the Marxist inheritance and opposition to Labour 'reformism'.

Since then, with the evolution of eurocommunism in the mid '70s, the breakup of the 'world communist movement' led by the USSR and the fracturing of a monolithic Labour Party, that old division has come to seem less and less relevant. In its place has come, on one side, the new axis of the 'soft' Labour Left, based on the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, and the broad Left of the Communist Party. On the other side there is now emerging an axis of the hard or fundamentalist Left which includes the erstwhile 'Stalinists' of the CP, various groupings from the old Trotskyist Left, many of whom have 'entered' the Labour Party, and Labour's traditional fundamentalist Left, including Tony Benn and the group around *Labour Herald*. This second, more newly fledged axis is now in evidence at 'movement' events such as the CND conference last Sunday where members from both Trotskyist and Stalinist backgrounds united against a resolution attributing some blame to the USSR for the arms race. (A similar division has taken place within the women's movement, but its 'fundamentalists' have little time for the male Left.)

In a move to give this fundamentalist axis a

History of an irretrievable breakdown

Aug 1968: Communist Party EC condemns the USSR 'intervention' in Czechoslovakia, beginning the CP split

Nov 1969: Congress narrowly confirms EC condemnation

Nov 1975: Congress votes for new edition of party programme, British Road to Socialism (BRS)

Mar 1977: CP discussion on new draft of BRS begins. Draft embraces eurocommunist notions of class formation, political pluralism, the broad democratic alliance, the role of the State and 'revolution as a process.'

July 1977: sharpest critics of draft, led by Sir French, split away to form New Communist Party

Nov 1977: Congress accepts new draft by large majority. Against advice of EC votes for sub-committee on *Star* to examine paper's contents. Also votes for Commission on Inner Party Democracy (IPD) to recommend changes in party's internal workings

Apr 1978: *Star* sub-committee reports confirming the editorial line will be taken from the Political Committee (PC) but recommending coverage be changed in line with BRS. Little change at *Star*

Sept 1978: *Marxism Today* (MTD) publishes Hobsbawm's article, 'Forward March of Labour Halted?' arguing decline of labour movement's political thrust

Jan 1979: MTD publishes Stuart Hall's 'Great Moving Right Show' inaugurating analysis of Thatcherism and popular shift to the right

Nov 1979: Congress accepts report of IPD Commission and rejects 'Alternative Proposals' of minority on Commission. Little change in party structure

Jan 1980: PC condemns USSR invasion Afghanistan to hardline fury

Aug 1982: MTD publishes article by Tony Lane critical of 'incorporated' trade union leaders. *Star* publishes immediate attack on article by Costello, hardline CP industrial organiser in first public political breach between Star and CP

Dec 1982: PC condemns dissolution of Solidarity and installation of martial law in Poland

Mar 1983: EC condemns *Star* for appointing Costello industrial reporter

Sept 1983: Tony Benn begins public criticism of and dissociation from MTD line on Labour's weakness

June 1983: PPPS AGMs reject five candidates nominated by CP

Nov 1983: *Star* editor and assistant editor, Chater and Whitfield, not on EC 'recommend list' and Congress does not elect them to EC

Jan 1984: EC expels four members for factional (hardline) activity at Congress

Mar 1984: EC presses Chater and Whitfield to resign, following Congress decision

June 1984: Scottish AGM of PPPS closed down on challenge from EC supporters wanting Chater's resignation. Aggregate AGM votes reject motion declaring confidence in Chater and Whitfield but elect only two of EC's 5 candidates

Oct 1984: Secretary of London District dies; emergency EC called to appoint Ian McKay acting district secretary; narrowly accepted by DC

26th: Special General Meeting of PPPS, organised by EC, votes for new editor and assistant for the *Star*. Hardliners boycott meetings following *Star* argument that it is out of order

3-4 Nov: 'Left Alive' organised by MTD boycotted by hardliners

17-18: Hardliners win control North West DC.

23rd: Emergency EC rules London District Congress not eligible to elect new DC

24th: London District Congress breaks up

24-25th: EC supporters win control of Northern district.

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coherent theoretical lead, five Communist Party members published a pamphlet in November called 'Class Politics, an answer to its critics'. Bearing the imprimatur of Tony Benn — 'This is a serious and important contribution to the debate about the future of socialism' — its principal point is that, far from class struggle having been weakened in the last decade, it has intensified and that 'the struggle for socialism must be based on class politics' though it does not define what these are. It attacks those who see ideology and culture, sexism and racism as issues separable from class politics and who see the way forward as depending on a weakening or decentralisation of the State. In particular, it disputes that there is a distinct political and economic phenomenon called 'Thatcherism'. Rather, it argues, this is a notion invented by euro-communists to justify an appeasement of the 'Right'.

The core of the argument between hard and broad Left therefore lies in an analysis of what actually happened to Britain the Labour movement and the Left during the last 15 years and what caused what the broad Left sees as a crisis for the Left. The authors of the pamphlet, Ben Fine, Lawrence Harris, Marjorie Mayo, Angela Weir and Elizabeth Wilson, are part of the sophisticated wing of CP hardliners many of whom were influenced by the French philosopher Louis Althusser during the '70s. Although they include a number of feminists, they are highly critical of the sorts of cultural and psychoanalytic critiques being produced inside the women's movement and outside it by intellectuals like Stuart Hall.

Although their politics are not 'hegemonic', so to speak, within the fundamentalist axis, they share their opposition to the CP leadership with two other party factions, a tiny group round a paper called *The Leninist* and a larger group, with stronger roots outside London and in the Labour Party, round *Straight Left*. What they all have in common, and this forms one of the bases for a new alliance with Trotskyists and the hard Labour Left, is a belief that Labour plummeted to defeat at the last general election not because of any decline in working class political awareness or desire for socialism (as presented by the hard Left) but because Labour failed, and has always failed, to campaign for uncompromising, class-based politics.

Thus in calling for a hard Left thrust that would break with political consensus they are denying that 'Thatcherism' has already broken any consensus. Indeed it is not at all clear from their published statements what fundamental changes they accept have taken place. They draw little significance from the changed class formation of Western societies, in particular the decline in the size and character of manual working-class jobs, and see little in either the divisions and strains within the modern capitalist State or in the growing diversity of the State's functions, from welfare shoring-up to repressive measures against its own employees within the Secret State at GCHQ. Much of the analysis stems from — indeed was given new life by — the miners' strike. But interpretation of what caused the strike and what it actually means, is far from being given. It will be disputed within the Left, as its repercussions will be felt, for many years to come.

OPTIONS FOR actual organisational realignment are limited because, apart from the reluctance of any wing of the CP to leave the organisation and its assets to the other side, no faction within the Labour Party has any intention of abandoning its foothold there especially when both fundamentalists and the LCC can chalk up recent victories for their positions. And while no faction with the Labour Party wishes to be infected from too hearty an embrace with communists, the broad Left faction in the CP is, in particular, critical of the failure of their allies in the Labour Party to look beyond the boundaries of the British Labour Party for knowledge or political inspiration. Again while both broad Left and the LCC are now ambivalent about Kinnock's leadership, this unhappiness is going to cause far more strain within the LCC than in the CP.

It is likely that the CP leadership will be looking for quick organisational solutions to the irreconcileable division within the party — such as expelling their opponents. It is unlikely, however, that they can merely manipulate the party's machinery in their favour unless they back up this with the no-holds-barred political fight which they have resisted so long for fear that political clarity will split the party. □

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IMMIGRATION

THE MIDDLE-CLASS ASIAN VOTE

Jolyon Jenkins explains why the government wanted the racism report rewritten

THE NEWS this week that the Home Office has 'persuaded' the Commission for Racial Equality to rewrite part of its report on Britain's immigration procedures has long been expected by groups concerned with immigrants' rights. Those groups, including the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, will also be critical of the failure of the CRE to withstand government pressure for change and its reluctance to make a public fuss over the long delay in the report's publication.

Publication of the report is now expected at the end of January. Conceived in the furore over the Heathrow virginity-test scandal, it has been gestating for five years and the Home Office was hoping for a still-birth. The report has been dogged by government obstruction and delay. At first it was claimed that the investigation was outside the CRE's legal remit. But the courts decided otherwise and in August 1980 the investigation went ahead. Final drafts of the report were circulating a year and a half ago, and although there has been some trouble with the printers, much of the delay since has been due to Home Office prevarication and horse trading over the report's contents. Because of the delay, pressure groups fear the Home Office will now say the report's findings are out of date.

It is not expected that the report will say anything particularly new — most of the injustices in immigration control have been well publicised already. But the CRE has had the advantage of having access to official files and so some of the allegations will be properly documented for the first time. For example, everyone involved in immigration work knows very well that some Entry Clearance Officers (responsible for issuing and denying visas to would-be immigrants at overseas posts) presume that all applications are, until proved otherwise, fraudulent. They think of their job as being to deny entry clearance to as many applicants as they can possibly get away with.

The report originally quoted some of the more damning remarks from ECO files. It is thought that the Home Office has been trying to get some of these quotes removed and that it has been working hard to improve the image and record of some of the posts that the report singles out for criticism.

Over the last year and a half the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office has been operating a highly sophisticated public relations campaign to boost the department's standing in the public eye. The responsibility for this probably lies with the IND's dynamic new Assistant Under Secretary, Hayden Phillips. Phillips celebrated his appointment with a personal letter to all 3,000 staff entitled 'The reputation and image of IND' and beginning 'Dear Colleague'. This is very much Phillips's style. He tries to disarm critics by adopting a chummy, all part of the family approach, and has been known to enliven official meetings by bringing up such subjects as his wife's pregnancy and his son's being hit on the head by a cricket ball.

The letter to his staff put forward a number of ways in which he hoped to win more friends for the IND: an annual public report on the work of the department was mooted and duly appeared; visits by senior civil servants to local community groups were suggested and have occurred. Phillips wrote that he was interested in promoting 'a more open attitude' but warned: 'This does not change instructions about approaches to individual officers. Confidentiality about cases should be maintained the same way as at present and any approach from a media representative should be referred to the Press Office via a supervising officer.'

This is the classic PR view of openness; a beguiling intimacy of manner round a core of iron secrecy. Phillips's new approach has been entirely cosmetic. The Annual Report contains little information not available elsewhere. It is occasionally unintentionally revealing of attitudes as, for example, when it says: 'Of the 136 complaints against the actions of Immigration Officers in 1983, about 30 were found to have had some element of truth,' implying that the remaining 106 were total fabrications. In fact, the formal complaints in writing represent

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the tip of an enormous iceberg of dissatisfaction.

NOT ALL has gone entirely to plan. David Waddington, the immigration minister, has carried out his own speaking tour. Some of these events have been quite disastrous. Before he could get going in Bristol, for example, a representative from the Campaign against Racist Laws stood up and suggested that as Waddington had plenty of platforms from which to present his views he should take the opportunity to listen to some of those affected by his policy. Waddington demurred, and offered to give an abridged speech. This suggestion was put to the vote and overwhelmingly rejected. Deeply embarrassed, the Minister had to sit and listen for more than an hour to a list of damning indictments. When he finally rose to speak, the entire audience walked out.

Waddington's senior civil servants have had more success. A series of smooth-talking mandarins have charmed hostile audiences around the country. Having complete mastery of the figures they have been able to deflect criticism with streams of statistics. They have also had the time-honoured excuse that they do not create policy but simply implement it. They have shown concern about individual cases raised and have assiduously chased up the ones brought to their attention, giving the appearance of efficiency and compassion. As far as the reality of immigration control goes, nothing has changed.

What *has* changed, and what lies behind all this activity, is the Tory strategy towards immigration. Their most pressing concern now is to get the middle-class Asian vote, and to do this they need to portray immigration as a dead issue, and play down controversy. They have probably got all the racist votes they can and are unlikely to lose them. In 1979 every immigration news story was about 'swamping'. The emphasis has now switched to deportations. These days there is often considerable community support for deportees, and sometimes it comes from solid Tory constituencies.

The classic recent case is that of the Pereira family, Indians who illegally settled in a Hampshire village. Rodney Pereira, a Roman Catholic double-glazing area manager, was the picture of middle-class respectability. The family's struggle against deportation was supported by the whole village and even by the *Daily Mail.* Eventually they were granted a last-minute reprieve.

Afia Begum, the young Indian widow whose husband died in an East End fire before she could join him in Britain, was not so lucky. An equally vigorous campaign did not stop her being deported. Her misfortune was that her supporters were predominantly working-class and left-wing, and they presented her case as much in political as humanitarian terms. This suited the Tories very well, because it further helped them to project immigration as a marginal issue and the concern of a lunatic fringe.

The immigration propaganda machine is now running fairly smoothly. The CRE report has the potential to put all this at risk. Watch out for Waddington's damage limitation exercises. □

All eyes on the *Observer*

Phillip Whitehead

FOR JIMMY PORTER the posh Sunday papers were all alike; 'different books, same reviews'. Today that pattern has spread to news and editorial; different news, same opinions. Not much change from a pound for the price of the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*. Not much change in their proprietors' viewpoints either. The best we can say is that for over three years Tiny Rowland, boss of Lonrho which owns the *Observer,* has kept the *Observer* going and has not been able to get rid of its editor, Donald Trelford.

The *Observer* has had an unhappy time packed in the Lonrho portfolio. The City believes that the breach between Rowland and Trelford has still, whatever the wishes of the editor, not been healed. Others on the Lonrho board, like Mr Du Cann, who will now have time on his hands, want to know what Lonrho is doing with a loss-making paper which they — laughably — see as a leftist embarrassment. The independent directors of the *Observer* include men like Sir Geoffrey Cox and Lord Windlesham, who know a thing or two about pressure. They have proved a better guarantor of last resort to Donald Trelford than were the directors of *The Times* to Harold Evans. Trelford survived Rowland's rage at his reports from Zimbabwe. He came through the losses of the last financial year. The problem about survival is that it brings its own deceits; Trelford may not realise that the game is about to take another fatal twist.

As those who have seen the intermediaries in action will realise, Tiny Rowland is now *en coquette* with Robert Maxwell. Fleet Street's newest tycoon would like the *Observer*. He already has the lucrative contract to print its colour magazine. If he had hints that the *Observer*'s future is in jeopardy, he would sooner buy it, securing his print contract and giving him the reach to take on Murdoch in the quality field. Lonrho, awash with cash and freed from potential Monopolies Commission embarrassments over the House of Fraser, could be offered a douceur — Maxwell's 15 per cent holdings in Fleet Newspapers (*Daily Star, Daily Express, Sunday Express*), as preparation for the day when the grip of Lord Matthews is prised loose. The *Daily* and *Sunday Expresses* would then be a much more congenial stamping ground for Tiny Rowland. The *Daily Star* might be closed down as part of the deal, since it is the one Fleet possession that challenges Maxwell's northern *Mirror* operation on its own ground.

Would Maxwell be allowed to get away with it this time, however feeble the monopolies legislation? Bringing the *Observer* together with two other Sunday papers, and the George Outram Group with the Scottish *Daily Record* ought to wake the trust-busters. But he may calculate that the *Observer* can be presented as a bankrupt enterprise and thus not subject to monopolies law. It is unlikely to meet its proprietor's challenge to break even in the six months from last 1 July. Its assets, apart from its Reuters' stake, are its title and goodwill. It does not own its building. So the same argument used for the *Sunday Times* by its vendors could be put, more accurately, this time. And Maxwell may believe that the parliamentary opposition will not try to invoke the monopolies law. After all he would be rescuing the paper from the demon Lonrho, to be 'Labour'.

It is perfectly true that a free-standing Sunday paper, as a solo operation, is a contradiction in terms. There are too many overheads, and there is well-buttressed opposition. The *Observer* today, symbolically split into four ever-changing sections, has problems of direction, style and labour relations which do not originate with the Lonrho regime. Is there an alternative to the Maxwell bear-hug? I think there is.

The paper's prospects would be transformed if three things were to happen. First, it would have to be bought by a genuinely independent left-of-centre group, who could raise the £5-6 millions which would be the likely purchase price if the field was played. Second, the management and unions would need to accept that this was a last chance to stay independent, which could not be imperilled on either side by adherence to the old Fleet Street norms. (The advent of Maxwell might concentrate some minds wonderfully.) Third, there would have to be a partnership with the one other paper whose interest runs with, and not against, an independent *Observer*. The wretched tale of missed opportunities which has kept the *Guardian* and the *Observer* apart for so long can still be brought to a conclusion. Printed on the same presses, the two papers make sense economically, however many selfish short-term interests obtrude.

The buzz is that all manner of worthies are trying to set up consortia to buy the *Observer*. SDP millionaires are being tapped for funds. Staffers dream of a buy-out from within. It will all count for nothing if Maxwell and Rowland decide otherwise, and set the terms in their own inimitable way. Unless . . . Unless that wide constituency in and around the *Observer* shows an equivalent will, from former proprietors, independent directors, journalists and printers to readers who are able to put their money where their instincts are. The present editor has shown true grit in facing out Rowland, and Atlantic Richfield before him. He's a survivor. Where he ought to be now is at the heart of a consortium prepared to bid for the paper as soon as a sale seems imminent, and to stick with the bid as Harold Evans could and should have done at the *Sunday Times*. □

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DIARY

Mary Harron

The travel agent assured me that the Canary Islands were a tropical paradise. Las Palmas turned out to be a seedier version of Brighton, set in a parched lunar landscape and raked by gale force winds; make any attempt at sunbathing and your sun tan lotion is instantly coated with a fine layer of sand. The Canaries are package holiday territory so they have all the trappings of Euro-culture — ubiquitous pizza bars and menus in five languages — but there is a decorous family jollity that makes the whole thing very likeable. Why do package holidays have such an awful image? I suppose it's due to the notion that ordinary people shouldn't go abroad because their presence is automatically corrupting. Actually if it wasn't for mass tourism the monuments of Europe would probably have been razed for office blocks by now. As for the Canary Islands, I can't see they have much to lose.

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I arrive back to find that Jonathan and Catherine Guinness are offering the story of the Mitford girls in the *Sunday Times*. It was the usual nostalgic tat but Sunday's account of Jessica 'Decca' Mitford ('The Communist') proved unintentionally fascinating. We were told that:

> Like her sisters Nancy and Diana . . . Decca developed a social conscience; and in her case it was more intensely felt simply because she had not, as they had, the distraction of caring also about culture. Both Nancy and Diana appreciated architecture and interior decoration and were interested in art.

Diana may have been a Fascist — sorry, had 'a social conscience' — but I bet she had wonderful drapes. I love this implication that culture and a social conscience are irreconcilable, and that Jessica's politics were somehow unhealthily fanatical because she wasn't interested in interior design.

○

This is morally insane drivel, and just what you might expect from a former head of the Monday Club, or indeed from the *Sunday Times*. But it's actually a very common attitude in Britain — Oxbridge is steeped in it — this notion that culture is somehow connected with the type of house you live in or with your social class. And of course it's an attitude fostered by people like the Guinnesses because, having inherited nice houses themseves, they have a stake in convincing others that nice furniture is some indicator of personal worth.

Frankly I blame America for much of this. Because Americans have taken a campy sort of liking to British culture of the '20s and '30s they have helped to shore up the British Establishment's most cherished cultural delusions — that, for example, Bloomsbury was a major Twentieth Century event. In fact Americans have bought the whole Bloomsbury/Chariots of Fire/Mitford package because they think it looks cute. It's as simple and shallow (if profitable) as that.

○

Back on the lower levels of the Titanic the *News of the World* colour magazine was celebrating George Michael and Andrew Ridgely of the pop group Wham!. George and Andrew are the most famous young men in Britain and it's all thanks to their sun-bronzed, package holiday 'young guns go for it image' — everything the Canary Islands are supposed to be and manifestly aren't. George is the fat, talented one, and all the sun lamps and hair lighteners can't really disguise his lack of looks. But Andrew is my favourite. Andrew can't sing, can't write songs and doesn't play on the records. He does nothing but look attractive and is, therefore, the perfect representative of the pop music fantasy Leisure Land of the 1980s.

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Speaking of Leisure Land, I went to the anniversary party at the Hippodrome — the unabashedly vulgar night club that Peter Stringfellow created in Leicester Square out of the old Talk of the Town. It was a sad occasion for anyone who remembered the place in all its old faded glory, an iridescent blue cavern with brass trimmings, a Margate version of the Arabian Nights. There used to be a hydraulically raised stage with headresses like huge jewelled pineapples towering from their heads. It was tacky and wistful and rather ironic and very English. Now it's all black and silver and Euro disco, and could be anywhere in the world. Incidentally a horde of *paparazzi* photographers guarded the entrance way but by midnight the biggest star to arrive was Su Pollard of *Hi de Hi!*; I like to think that was the Old Talk of the Town, taking its revenge.

ROGER WODDIS

Ban the Thaw!

'It would be fatal to change course now in response to pressures to restore the dangerous illusions of the period of détente in the 1970s.' — The Times

If we were to wake up one morning
And find that the world had gone sane,
The sellers of darkness would suffer,
And only the children would gain.

None would be free to market
Computers to count the dead;
Consider the ills that would follow,
If peace raised its ugly head.

The chemists we hire would be powerless
To poison the growing plant;
We'd drown in the scent of roses,
If ever we had détente.

The bells would ring hope and laughter,
And millions would cheer the chimes;
Oh, the horror of being human,
If nobody read *The Times*!

○

Who said this? 'Most of the trouble I've gotten into during my life was a result of caring too much about other people.' Answer: John De Lorean, in an interview in New York's *East Side Express*. Now think of some other unlikely explanations for famous failures. I think there's a *New Statesman* competition hidden in this.

○

Last week everyone I know was talking about '28 Up', the Granada documentary which traced the lives of 20 children from the ages of 7 to 28. It seems to have touched off a nationwide mood of introspection — who can resist brooding over their own lives, their changing characters and lost opportunities?

The film included the lives of only four girls, which was a great give-away; no doubt in 1963 they assumed they would all marry and raise children and why be repetitious? And so the film's missed out on a generation-worth of change; over the past 20 years women have been much more a product of their time, and have shown much subtler generational shifts, than men.

Self-pity is of course a crucial element of this sort of introspection, which may explain what follows. If I had to characterise my own generation (who are now 30) I'd say we are the ones who grew up with an awareness of what feminism had to offer and the emotional conditioning not to take advantage of it. That's the only explanation I can find for why my talented friends have spent the last ten years Finding Themselves and worrying about their emotional lives while the men — nice but, you know, *dull* — have gone romping home to brilliant careers. I know there's an alternative argument, that women are above ambition and the repository of spiritual values, but frankly it makes me want to go out and kill. Never mind, at least we've had our emotional torment — we'll be laughing at 40 as they go through their mid-life crisis.

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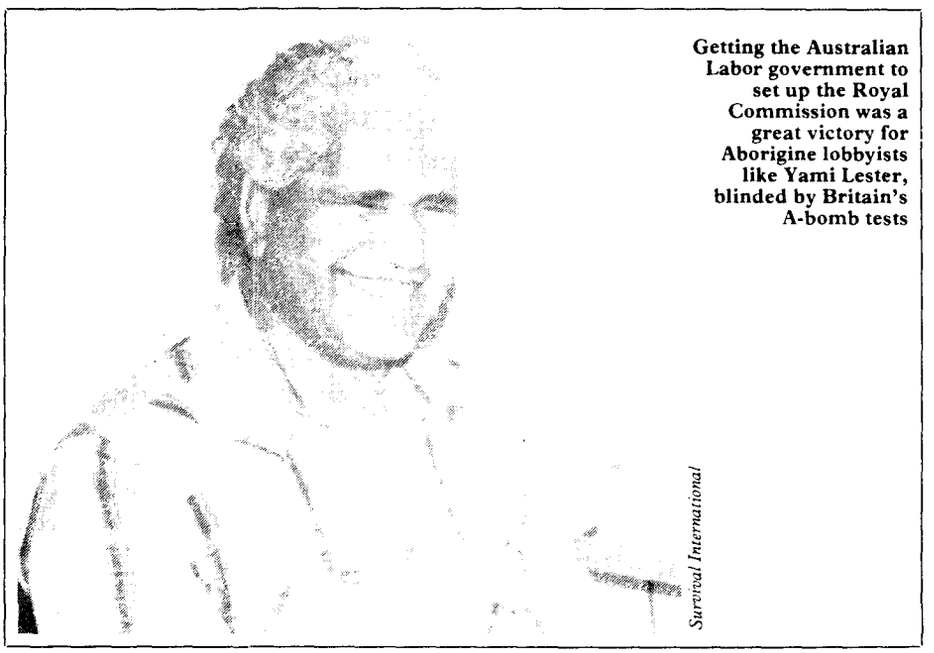
FALLOUT OF A CLOUD OF SECRECY

British nuclear weapons tests in the Australian desert in the 1950s were conducted under intense secrecy and with no concern for the safety of the Aborigines or service personnel. Robert Milliken reports on new evidence brought to light by the Australian Royal Commission



Getting the Australian Labor government to set up the Royal Commission was a great victory for Aborigine lobbyists like Yami Lester, blinded by Britain's A-bomb tests

Survival International

Sydney

FLAK FROM Britain's nuclear weapons tests in the 1950s is beginning to hit today's Thatcher government as an Australian Royal Commission continues to delve into the tests. Since early October, the Commission has been taking evidence around Australia from more than 100 veterans and scientists, and next month it will travel to Britain to question another 60 witnesses. It is at that point that a simmering row between Britain and Australia over the release of crucial documents could blow up.

Already it is clear from evidence given reluctantly by Australian scientists, and not so reluctantly by ex-servicemen, that a big cover-up has been engineered by British and Australian authorities over the past 30 years. Exactly how much radiation was released by the tests, how much plutonium has been left lying around the desert and how many Aborigines and British and Australian veterans were contaminated has never been admitted. The answers almost certainly lie in documents which Whitehall is trying desperately to keep secret.

Between 1952 and 1957, Britain detonated 12 nuclear devices in Australia with a combined yield of almost 180 kilotons — 4.5 times the explosive power of the two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Most of the blasts happened at a place called Maralinga, an Aboriginal word meaning thunder, in the central desert of South Australia.

The last bomb was exploded in 1957, but for the next seven years there was a series of so-called 'minor trials' at Maralinga, some of which involved the dispersal of plutonium into the atmosphere. These trials, with code names like Kittens, Rats and Vixen, were apparently to test triggering devices for atomic bombs and to see what would happen if a bomb exploded accidentally. The 'minor trials' are shrouded in even more mystery than the main blasts themselves because many took place at a time when Britain was party to an international moratorium on the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. They are expected to be a big focus of attention during the Royal Commission's hearings in Britain.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the tests were conducted with all the typical bravado of the Cold War. The scientists who chose Maralinga as the main test site asked few questions about Aborigines whose tribal homelands may have been involved. 'There was the view in the back of everybody's minds that the land was unoccupied and likely to remain so,' Dr Keith Lokan, Director of the Australian Radiation Laboratory, explained to the Commission in Melbourne recently. A community of 200 Aborigines now lives just seven miles south of Maralinga, an area where, as Lokan himself admits, hundreds of acres of land are contaminated with plutonium.

FOR 12 YEARS after Britain finally withdrew from Maralinga in 1966, the nuclear tests faded quietly into oblivion. Then in the late '70s, lawyers acting for Aboriginal groups and for some of the 15,000 Australian ex-servicemen involved in the tests charged that a disturbing number of them had either died of cancer or suffered ill health as a result of radiation exposure.

Under mounting pressure, the Australian Ionising Radiation Advisory Council (AIRAC), a government body of which Lokan is a member, produced a report last year which virtually whitewashed the whole affair. The tests, it said, had been conducted with due care and no Australians at the test ranges had been exposed to radiation in excess of doses permitted by international standards at the time.

The Council's report sparked a furore. When Bob Hawke's Labor government came to power two months later, in March 1983, it asked Professor Charles Kerr of the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at Sydney University to take a hard look at the reliability of the evidence. Kerr found that the Council had failed to consider significant data and had been guilty of obfuscation. Kerr recommended nothing less than a full-scale Royal Commission, which got under way eight weeks ago — just three months after yet another government report asserted that Australia had been kept ignorant all along about the true nature of the British tests.

This is one of the key questions the Commission of three is now trying to answer. The chairman is Mr Justice James McClelland, a dry, laconic judge and former Labor Party member of the Senate, the upper house in Canberra. Britain virtually ignored the Commission for the first six weeks of its hearings in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The Thatcher government promised its full co-operation but declined to send anyone to put Britain's case. It appears as though the British authorities want to keep the lid on Maralinga today as much as they did 30 years ago.

The British Nuclear Veterans' Association, representing the 500 British troops and airmen involved in the tests, sought legal aid in both Britain and Australia to appear but was turned down. Lawyers at the Commission representing Austalian veterans, Aborigines and the Australian government were frustrated by Britain's non-appearance because it meant a mass of documents crucial to the unravelling of the Maralinga story remained locked away in British archives.

Britain has in fact declassified hundreds of documents covering cloud drift from some of the earliest bomb blasts, and other vital scientific questions, but, through a curious agreement with the Australian government, then got Australia to agree to protect their confidentiality — in other words, to keep them secret. When this cosy arrangement emerged a few weeks ago, McClelland had already been involved in a public row with the new British High Commissioner to Australia, Sir John Leahy, who had complained that the

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Commission's taking of evidence in public 'reflected on the British government'. McClelland called on Leahy to put up or shut up. Then he tersely rebuked the authorities over the documents' secrecy. 'It is a rather unsatisfactory state of affairs . . . that there is ultimately a right of British veto,' he said. 'It is most desirable that we should not conduct this Commission with our hands tied behind our backs.'

A FORTNIGHT ago Britain suddenly changed its mind and decided to send legal counsel to the Commission. This will probably not happen until the London hearings start in early January. Among the witnesses expected to be called then is Sir William Penney who, as Director of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment, was Britain's supremo of the bomb tests. Meanwhile, the Commission's lawyers are still haggling with the British authorities over the release of documents. The Australian Defence Department has grudgingly released some 8,500 documents to the Commission — some of British origin — and Britain last week agreed to lift the confidentiality rule on others. But many more remain under wraps and the Commission is still in the dark over precisely how many files Whitehall is sitting on.

Britain's belated decision to be legally represented appears to have been sparked by the way the Commission has been delving into several thorny matters that may eventually affect Britain financially. Most significantly, there is the question of what to do about the Maralinga test site to make it habitable again for Aborigines who were removed 30 years ago and who may now want to return — a key point in the Commission's terms of reference.

We have now had graphic descriptions of how, during the Vixen 'minor trials', plutonium was burned in petrol fires and the plutonium oxide scattered downwind in experiments designed to measure the radiological hazards from an accidental nuclear explosion. Lokan has told the Commission he now believes these experiments should never have taken place, 'because plutonium has a very long half life and the problem is with us then for a very long time.'

There was a clean-up, of a most cursory kind, called Operation Brumby in 1967 when a team of Royal Engineers and staff from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment ploughed the Maralinga site, a procedure which simply involved turning the plutonium into the topsoil to a depth of less than four inches. More cumbersome radioactive debris was sealed in cement and buried in pits.

In 1979 Britain removed half a kilogram of plutonium from Maralinga and took it back to Britain, leaving about 20 kilograms still buried there and an unknown quantity scattered about. An agreement with Australia at the time appeared to absolve Britain of any further responsibility. But the Commission may recommend otherwise. Lokan and other Australian experts have now admitted that Operation Brumby was unacceptable. If, as seems likely, the Commission recommends that Britain be asked to come back and clean the place up properly, the cost of such an exercise could be enormous.

Britain's initial antagonism towards the enquiry owes a lot to the intense secrecy with which the tests were conducted and the nuclear rivalry between Britain and the United States in the '50s. Britain had initially sought a test site in the US for its atomic bomb programme, but the Americans stalled. Documents released in Australia this year show that when the tests began in 1952, the Americans sent their own air crews to South Australia. This was ostensibly to assist with meteorological research, but in fact they took cloud samples of the British blasts to help the Pentagon find out what the other nuclear powers were up to. This was another source of ill feeling between London and Washington.

WHATEVER THE Commission may uncover about casual safety standards and inadequate decontamination procedures at Maralinga, it is likely to learn little about the exact military nature of the tests. When McClelland, the chairman, asked recently if Britain could be expected to volunteer all the information in its possession, Lokan replied: 'I am certain that they are unlikely to volunteer information which carried what they perceive as military implications. In some ways it is nice not to be contaminated with too much knowledge about military matters.'

Two incidents which have come out over the past few weeks reveal the extent of the obsession with secrecy. After one of the Maralinga blasts, in 1957, officials discovered an Aboriginal family who said they had camped in the bomb crater for two days and drank water collected there. The family were given showers and sent back to the desert. John Hutton, an Australian serviceman, has told the Commission that 200 soldiers were assembled later and told by a British officer that if anyone let news of the incident out to the media they would be tried for treason. The men were allegedly reminded that under the Secrecy Act they could be shot by firing squad or jailed for 30 years if they talked about it.

Britain did not tell Australian scientists that highly radioactive cobalt 60 was to be used in some devices. When cobalt 60 pellets were found scattered in the desert in 1958 after the blasts, Australian officials were told to keep quiet. Harry Turner, Australia's health physics representative at Maralinga, told the Commission: 'This was the most embarrassing episode on the range. It left us a little bit unhappy as to why the British did this without informing us.' Turner also admitted that part of his job was to stop stories of the tests getting out to the public.

For many British and Australian test veterans, of course, the Royal Commission is too late. The question of compensation for death or injury associated with atomic fallout is not part of its brief. More than 100 veterans and their families have applied to the Australian government for compensation; only one has succeeded, with a payment of less than £30,000. Five more are taking their cases direct to the courts, but it will be a long fight.

Australia's hypocrisy, as much as Britain's secrecy, is being exposed by the Commission. While Australia was publicly decrying nuclear weapons' proliferation in the '50s it was playing unquestioning host to the British tests as an intense battle of wits raged between Britain and America over their latest nuclear secrets. □

AFRICA

SEEING THROUGH THE IMF'S TERMS

Suzanne Cronje on President Nyerere (below), new leader of the OAU

AFRICA'S DEBTOR nations are considering common action against the tough terms imposed on them by the International Monetary Fund. This follows a suggestion made by President Julius Nyerere, the newly elected chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, at the recent OAU summit. In a speech which started by deploring the fact that millions of Africans face death from starvation, Nyerere related the continent's poverty to the refusal by industrialised countries to engage in global negotiations to change the economic climate in favour of development.

The powerful and rich nations 'solved' the problems of Third World countries on a case-by-case basis, he said, thus perpetuating their control over the poor nations. But effective measures to counter this trend were possible, just by exchanging information on the course of the negotiations countries were conducting with 'external economic institutions' — a code word for the IMF. An agreement accepted under protest by one country is used to bring pressure on another to accept similar terms.

Nyerere is a leading critic of the IMF and has refused for the last five years to accept the conditions the Fund is trying to impose on his country in return for much needed credits. He says that the conditions would destroy Tanzania's socialist aspirations and result in mass unemployment, as well as depriving the people of essential services such as health and education. Other African leaders may have no such ideological scruples, but all resent the 'package' insisted on by the IMF in return for its favours: devaluation, a trade liberalisation which promotes imports, and an end to government subsidies on food and petrol.

Most of the African leaders at the summit were enthusiastic about the idea of sharing information on negotiating tactics. Although this is far from establishing a common front, let alone the much-feared revolt of debtor nations, it is a move in that direction. Perhaps this is why the British press carried practically no news of these developments, preferring to concentrate on Africa's economic and political failures.

Of course the summit, which took place at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa, was inextricably linked with the Ethiopian drought, as far as Fleet Street was concerned. A leading article in *The Times* complained that 'the OAU

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has done nothing to prevent or mitigate the famine', and saw force in the argument that 'the whole Ethiopian scene is symbolic of the ineffectiveness and irrelevance of the OAU'. Such comments contain a degree of wishful thinking. The OAU's preoccupation in recent years with the problems of Chad and the Western Sahara have led to deep divisions, but these are carefully fostered by the United States and its allies precisely because the OAU had become such an effective international voice.

Western alarm at this development became acute in 1975 when the OAU — following Nigeria's lead — recognised Angola's left-wing liberation movement, the MPLA, as the legitimate government in Luanda. Given the opposition of Washington, under President Carter, and the direct intervention of Henry Kissinger, the MPLA would probably have had difficulties in establishing its international status without the endorsement of the OAU.

The endorsement of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) — otherwise known as the Western Sahara — as a full OAU member at this year's summit is being compared to the 1975 decision on the MPLA. Once again it was Nigeria which made the decisive move by announcing its formal recognition of the SADR on the eve of the summit. Once again a close ally of the US — King Hassan of Morocco — is the losing party. He may try to get his own back yet. The King's representative said somewhat ominously, 'Our judicial, political and diplomatic arsenal is not exhausted. We have the means which the King will use when the time comes'. Then he walked out of the conference hall, at the head of his 140-strong delegation, which chanted in unison 'The Sahara is Moroccan', before disappearing into the car park, with slightly bemused African presidents looking on. In Rabat, capital of Morocco, the royal press predicted that Morocco's departure was the beginning of the end for the OAU; in Addis Ababa the summit continued, more united than for some time, now that the Saharan issue had been decided.

BUT MOROCCO did make history in becoming the first member to leave the OAU since it was founded in 1963. This leaves 50 member states (Zaire, whose delegate followed Morocco out, only suspended its membership). All independent African countries are represented, and their attention will once again concentrate on South Africa and Namibia. The fact that eight member States (including Tanzania) paid up their outstanding membership fees during the summit probably means that the southern African liberation movements — SWAPO and the ANC — will receive increased support through the African Liberation Committee (ALC). As the ALC is based in Dar-es-Salaam, and Nyerere has long been identified with southern African liberation, reports of a new OAU initiative in that direction are probably well-founded.

Although Nyerere was chosen by acclaim, his chairmanship could be a controversial one. He is the OAU's most outspoken critic of African politics. He reminds the organisation from time to time that it is 'not a trade union of African Heads of State' and that 'it must *sometimes* raise a voice against those regimes in Africa, including independent Africa, who oppress the people'. When the OAU did nothing about the murderous rule of Idi Amin, he took his country to war and toppled the Ugandan dictator. But this was not before Amin's troops had attacked Tanzania, without attracting censure from the OAU. His statements on this conflict were also highly critical of Libya and Colonel Gadafy who, according to Tanzania, fought for Amin longer than Uganda's own troops.

In accepting the 1984/85 chairmanship Nyerere spoke of his reluctance to accept the honour and the work involved 'if our organisation is to be guarded and strengthened'. This heralds changes in the charter which are long overdue, particularly on human rights. There is little doubt that Nyerere will be the most active chairman the OAU has had for years. His term coincides with his last few months of office as Tanzanian President — after 23 years in the leadership, he has refused to stand for re-election next year. Recent government changes in Tanzania were designed to give his colleagues greater control, and it is likely that he will use the OAU chairmanship to ease himself gradually out of office. An interesting year seems to be ahead for the OAU. □

LAW OF THE SEA

MINING MONEY'S SIGNATURE TUNE

David Ward on why Reaganite ideology blocks a world treaty

WHEN, AT Montego Bay Jamaica, 119 countries signed a convention governing the exploitation of the sea's resources, it was a major diplomatic triumph. That was two years ago. Next month, on 9 December, the signature period for the convention expires, leaving it unsigned by leading mining nations, notably Britain and the United States.

As a result, UNCLOS (the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) may be transformed from one of the most remarkable international negotiations ever held to a nightmare of conflict in international relations, with the industrialised countries characterised as power hungry exploiters wishing to plunder the riches of the ocean at the expense of the underprivileged in the Third World.

UNCLOS, which took nine years to negotiate, covers 25 different issues dealing with all aspects of ocean management. In place of today's haphazard definitions, it sets agreed limits to a nation's territorial sea, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf, and clarifies rights of navigation. It also includes provisions for conservation, environmental protection, and marine scientific research. Finally, and most controversially, the Convention has agreed seabed mining provisions to enable exploitation of the mineral wealth lying on the ocean floor. It is these provisions which the major mining nations will not accept.

Scattered across the seabed at depths of about 5,000 metres are potato-sized nodules consisting of manganese, nickel, copper and cobalt. The nodules are estimated to cover about 15 per cent of the ocean floor and deposits have been located in the Atlantic, the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The sites which have attracted the most commercial attention are the Clarion-Clipperton area (roughly between Hawaii and Mexico) and in the Indian Ocean. Studies estimate that there may be 15,000-25,000 million tonnes of nodules of commercial grades on the ocean floor.

It is difficult to estimate the earning potential of these reserves, but a tentative guess suggests it could be $1.5 trillion, assuming contemporary price and demand levels. Third World countries have been determined to lay their claim to this harvest. In 1967, developing countries succeeded in adopting a UN declaration of principles proclaiming the ocean floor and its wealth to be the 'Common Heritage of Mankind'.

To satisfy this principle, the Convention establishes a regulatory framework of licensing, production control and public international enterprise through an International Seabed Authority (ISA) which itself would undertake ocean floor mining. The ISA will also be able to contract with either private mining companies or State-backed ventures to give them mining rights operating in parallel with the Authority's own mining operation (termed 'The Enterprise').

On application for a licence private companies must submit to the ISA details of potential mine sites which will then be divided in two. The ISA will allocate half of this area to the applicant and reserve the remainder for its own use. In addition contractors will be obliged to make available to the Authority on 'fair and reasonable terms' the technology used to mine the seabed. Benefits from 'The Enterprise' would be fed back to Third World nations.

THE UNITED STATES and some other major industrial nations have found it impossible to support such a system. Led with unrelenting ideological zeal by the administration of President Reagan, they are unwilling to inhibit the operations of the major Western mining companies. Of course these companies (including the British-based RTZ, BP and Consolidated Gold Fields) organised in a number of private consortia already have the skills, technology and potentially have the capital required to mine the sea floor.

The Reagan Administration, if not all the other major industrialised countries (France and Japan have signed the Convention), is determined to torpedo the Law of the Sea treaty. Having adopted the most hardline posture at the talks the US has since firmly rejected the Convention. It will neither sign nor undertake any further negotiations. Stimulated by right-wing dogmatists such as William Safire, the *New York Times* columnist who has described UNCLOS as a 'super OPEC in minerals ... operated under the United Nations and dominated by the world socialist nations', the White House favours unilateral seabed mining in defiance of the Convention.

In response, the developing countries have threatened to challenge unilateral mining at the International Court of Justice in the Hague. According to Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore, the President of the UNCLOS negotiations, 'any attempt by any State to mine

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the resources of the deep seabed outside the Convention will earn the universal condemnation of the international community and will incur grave political and legal consequences.'

Criticism of the Reagan Administration has also been voiced by Elliot Richardson, the former leader of the US delegation at UNCLOS. Richardson is sceptical that any investment in seabed mining will occur outside the Convention. 'Domestic United States law', states Richardson, 'cannot confer on anyone a generally recognised legal right to exploit a defined area of the seabed . . . without such a right no rational investor will gamble (the estimated) $1.5 billion on a deep seabed mining project'.

For Britain, the Law of the Sea poses difficult and delicate policy options. As a major maritime power it needs a stable regime governing issues of jurisdiction and navigation. But as a country with significant mining interests, those interests want the freedom to actively exploit the resources available on the sea floor. At present the Conservative government shares the same doubts about the Convention as the Reagan Administration, but not their intransigence. The British government has not refused to sign the treaty outright, but rather has argued that there is still time to make improvements in it and is prepared to work for further compromise. Unlike the US, therefore, the door is still open for full British support for the Convention.

CURRENTLY a Ministerial review of policy towards the Law of the Sea is taking place before the signature period expires. Failure to sign risks the loss of special status offered to the mining companies under the Convention's so-called Preparatory Investment Protection Resolution (PIP). The resolution guarantees the right of first generation seabed mining operations (ie the major Western mining consortia plus state ventures from India and the Soviet Union) to explore selected areas of the seabed before the Convention comes into force and guarantees pioneer investors priority for commercial exploitation once the ISA is established.

The privileges were among the major concessions offered to the industrialised countries by the Third World at the end of the UNCLOS conference. But the special status is only available to those who sign the convention within the two-year period. Without signing by 9 December, Britain stands to throw away the benefits gained from earlier negotiations. So far the Foreign Office Minister responsible, Malcolm Rifkind, has lamely reiterated the ideological critique promoted by the US government. Unless the present Ministerial review provokes a major rethink of policy, Britain's approach to the Law of the Sea will be, in Denis Healey's words, 'one more example of the government behaving as President Reagan's poodle'. □

A booklet, 'The Law of the Sea — The Choice Between Anarchy and Order', by David Ward fully explains the background to UNCLOS. Published by the World Development Movement, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, WC2, price 95p.

POLAND

WARSAW'S URBAN BLIGHT

Gary Mead traces the rise of a maverick outsider

PERHAPS THE strangest episode in recent Polish politics is the rise to power and political influence of a journalist, once better known for his satirical side-swipes against politicians from his own country. Since August 1981 Jerzy Urban has been the Polish government's official spokesman, with Ministerial rank. But although a key figure in today's hierarchy, Urban is not a member of the ruling PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party). On the four occasions in the past when he applied for PZPR membership he was rejcted. Urban has come to be one of the most universally loathed members of the Polish regime, through his habit of pouring scorn and abuse on Solidarity, Walesa, the West, and the Roman Catholic Church. This contumely serves the regime, especially as Urban is excluded from its inner sanctum.

Urban clearly enjoys his regular dramatic performances. Almost every week he holds a press conference, attended by most Warsaw-based foreign correspondents, as well as many (silent) Polish journalists from the official media. A ritual game is played. Urban is asked several provoking questions on human rights, the Church-State relationship, or Poland's ailing economy. His responses are a mixture of sarcastic wit at the expense of Western reporters and a dogmatic refusal to be drawn on anything at all.

If the correspondents saw sense and boycotted the conferences, they would lose nothing in terms of information; only Urban would suffer, deprived of his stage.

Urban's relish for his role can partly be explained by the frustrations he experienced earlier in his career. He was born of Jewish parents, name Urbach, in the industrial city of Lodz, in 1933. He and his upper-middle class family were lucky to escape extermination, and Jerzy went to Warsaw University to study law and journalism. Along with several other disaffected young communists Urban set up *Po Prostu* in the early 1950s, a magazine which became highly influential among non-Stalinist communists until it was forcibly closed a few years later. But already Urban was pursuing two careers, journalism and informing for the secret police, the UB. Urban surprised a journalist colleague one day by inviting him to a café — before his elevation to power Urban was a devotee of Warsaw's cafe and night life. When asked what the reason for this unusual generosity might be, Urban said that he felt that he owed something to his colleague for having spied on him for the UB for so many years.

THIS GRISLY humour is an essential ingredient of Urban's journalism and personal outlook (he described his own daughter in the satirical magazine *Szpilki* as 'that fat ugly girl'). His delight in practical jokes has left him few close friends. In the 1970s he worked for the leading intellectual Party weekly, *Polityka*. A fellow *Polityka* journalist one day asked to borrow a small sum from Urban, to which he agreed, on condition that the other would give Urban his *Polityka* pass. A few days later the pass arrived back at the *Polityka* office, accompanied by a letter purporting to come from a disgruntled prostitute claiming that she had not been paid.

Urban's journalism flourished at *Polityka* under the tutelage of the paper's editor, Mieczyslaw Rakowski, who is now a Deputy Prime Minister. Even today Urban and another Jaruzelski aide, Wieslaw Gornicki, are acknowledged to be two of the finest of post-war Polish journalists. But in the 1960s Urban offended a pal of the then leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka. Gomulka decreed that Urban should not be allowed to publish. That was the first time Urban's alter-ego, Jan Rem, appeared in print. Jan Rem has surfaced from time to time ever since.

In 1981 Urban took to writing political briefs on his own initiative, and sent them to the then Party boss, Stainislaw Kania. Eventually Kania took Urban on board as an adviser and spokesman, and Jaruzelski inherited him. It was the opening to real political influence that Urban had longed for. All the Western correspondents who once looked down on Urban were finally forced to listen to, if not to respect, Urban's opinions.

BUT URBAN has committed two political errors in the recent past. Maksymilian Kolbe was a Franciscan priest who, before the last war, edited a virulently reactionary Catholic paper, which gave room to anti-semitic views. Kolbe died at Auschwitz, where he gave his life in order to save another Pole. For his courage he was canonized in 1983 by the Polish Pope, John Paul II. Urban responded with a savage attack on the Church for its failure to heed Kolbe's distasteful past. Overnight Urban was drenched with literary attacks from journalists, the Catholic press, and even some 'liberal' members of the establishment, and forced to admit that he had been 'tactless'.

The second blunder came when Rem, alias Urban, published a vicious piece on Father Jerzy Popieluszko shortly before the abduction and murder of the priest. Rem described Popieluszko as being 'an organiser of sessions of political rabies' and as conducting 'séances of hatred'. Following the murder Urban has been conducting all the PR concerning the case; one senior Polish journalist has remarked that Urban's handling of the news release about it bears all the hallmarks of the suspense stories published 15 years ago in the magazine *Kurisy* by Urban — under a different name, of course.

Despite Urban's PR skills his hold on the centre of power is tenuous. He is not a member of the Jaruzelski inner sanctum, and is not trusted by his old chum Rakowski. Urban attracts the hatred of the insane 'haters' on the Right of the PZPR, those Stalinist fanatics running the deeply anti-Jewish paper *Rzeczywistosc*. Why he continues to play his bizarre role in the Polish regime is often seen as an enigma. His own desire for power he can exercise on his own terms may be the simple answer. Why — and for how long — the Polish regime still finds a use for him is a different matter. □

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LETTERS

Pride of India

Rt Hon. Michael Foot MP, House of Commons

The *New Statesman* had a long and honourable reputation for the sympathy and understanding which it showed for the cause of Indian independence. I hope you may appreciate how this past record only adds to the offence given by the two odious articles you have published since the assassination of Indira Gandhi, one by David Selbourne (*NS* 9 November) and another by Amrit Wilson (*NS* 16 November).

On one aspect of the matter, which naturally arouses a special anguish among multitudes of Indians, the two articles seek to establish at the same time these three propositions: Mrs Gandhi is held responsible (1) for creating Sikh terrorism; (2) for failing to suppress it immediately; (3) for the actions she did eventually take for its suppression. It is hard to estimate which part of the case is worse, the absurdity or the malignity. But if the whole of this thesis which runs so strongly counter to what many people had previously held to be Mrs Gandhi's known views on communal strife and intolerance were accepted, then it would offer an excuse for the assassination. That is the ugly inference of these articles, and a further reason, apart even from their falsity, why they must be so bitterly resented at such a moment in India's history.

The imbecility as well as the venom of David Selbourne's article is illustrated when he tries to portray Mrs Gandhi as a kind of British-Fabian stooge. A portrait less like the real Indira Gandhi it would be hardly possible to conceive. One of her strongest attributes was her repudiation of the subordinate role which British Conservatism and, on occasions, the British Foreign Office would wish to allocate to her.

I trust that few of your readers will have been deceived by it but, if any were, I commend to them a few paragraphs written on this part of her character by Abu Abraham, whose credentials as a socialist observer of the scene cannot be contested, and who really did understand how she had broken with the old colonialist framework. 'I have often,' he says, 'been asked by friends and relatives, acquaintances, usually with a touch of sarcasm, "What is the 'secret' of your admiration for Mrs Gandhi?" There was no secret. I admired her because she was a nationalist. She stood up for India and she came to represent India. Her pride was the nation's pride. For every Indian who said "we Indians can't do it" or "we can't do anything properly", she repeated a hundred times that we can. While those who have done extremely well in their careers or in making money would sit down and denigrate the country, she tried to give her people self-confidence. It is not that she was a chauvinist, but just that she knew what this country could achieve, and has, so she did not dwell too much on the faults and weaknesses of our society. While so many others enjoyed inspecting our drains and showing them to foreigners, she preferred to reflect on our glories and on the potential greatness of this nation.'

Of course, everyone can accept that argument will continue about what happened in the years of the Emergency. That debate, properly conducted, could make a contribution to India's future. But it is also worth noting that the Indian people themselves had an opportunity of passing their judgment on these questions at the ballot box on two previous occasions — and will now have a further chance in 1984.

Some people sometimes choose to dismiss these verdicts on the ground that Indian democracy is a fake. Superior people like David Selbourne invite us not to take too much notice what the Indian people actually do with their votes. This is the last refuge of neo-colonialism, and I trust that few *New Statesman* readers will be found retreating into it.

Quaint old customs

Gregory Woods, London SE11

On Thursday 22 November I entered the country at Dover and declared to the customs that I was carrying three issues of *Gai Pied* and one each of two other (non-pornographic) French gay periodicals. A young customs officer examined them in a private room and allowed me to keep them. He repeatedly described this as a 'concession', since the journals were being imported only for my personal 'use'.

If I had not declared them, or if I had had more than one copy of each (say, a copy for a friend) they would all have been confiscated and I might have had to pay the legal penalty for smuggling.

Those of your readers who are blessed with the sexual orientation of God and the Queen may like to remember the rest of us when they buy national and foreign newspapers from W.H. Smith. (More practically, they could contribute to the Defend Gay's the Word Campaign — see *NS* 23 November, p 5, for details.) Incidentally, grovelling for 'concessions' takes time; I missed my train.

People, not chairs

Harvey Cole, Winchester

I must protest against a trend which seems to have taken over your columns. That is the habit of referring to those people who preside over meetings, committees or other bodies as if they were the seat from which they do so.

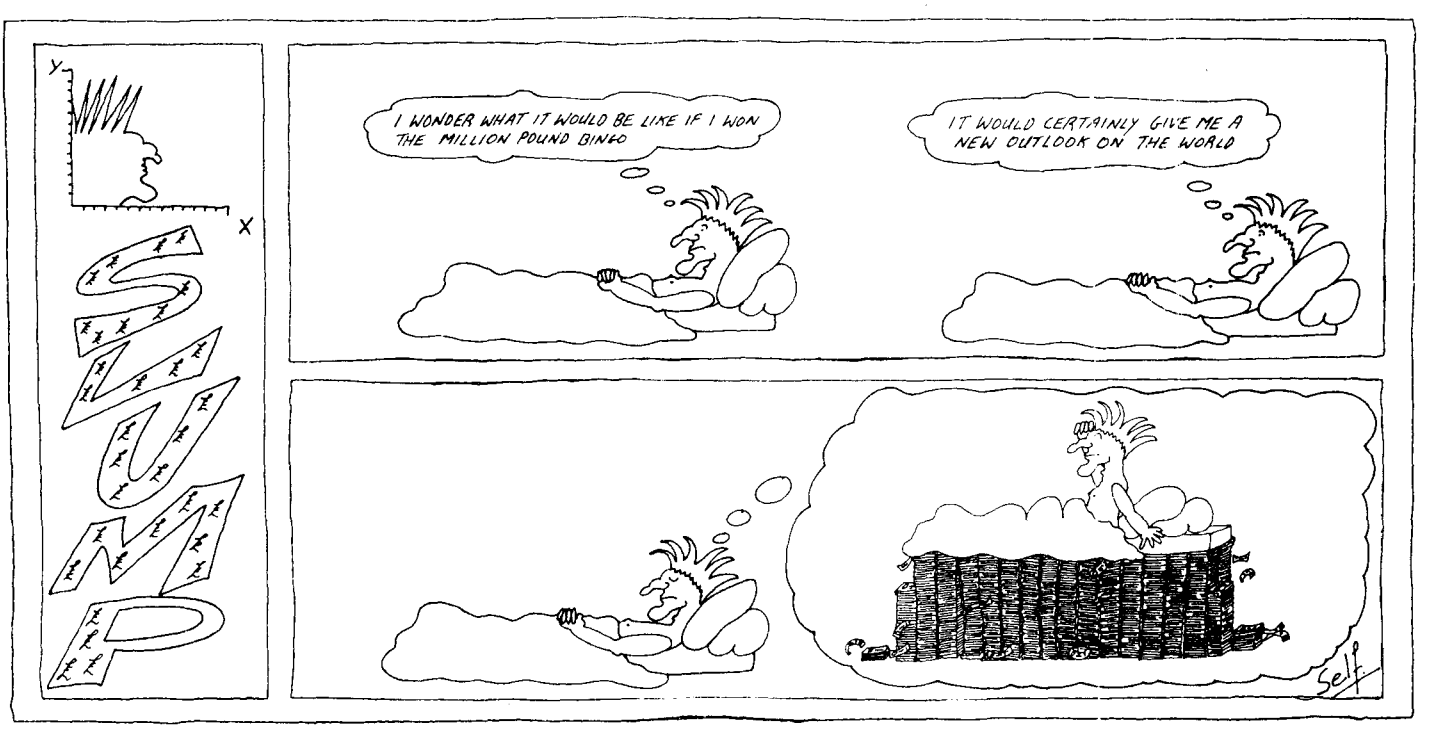
Can we have an end to this depersonalisation? While I note that the two women referred to last week have been given a capital C (in an attempt to curry sexist favour?) people are not chairs. Down with furniturism!

Kellner has a point . . .

Stephen Shellard, Dumfries

Peter Kellner's foreboding that the miners are losing the current strike has upset a few people which is no surprise (Letters 23 November). His is certainly not the spirit which will wrest victory from the jaws of defeat. I daresay his gloomy presentiments do nothing for the resolve of the miners and may even play into the hands of those who would be happy to see Arthur Scargill humiliated.

Fair and balanced criticism of Arthur Scargill arising from those who support the miners and their strike may be the best way of cancelling the hysteria regarding his persona which the press has so readily whipped up and sustained. Such criticism may have a bitter taste for those mining



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communities which have derived inspiration from his leadership over the past months, and may be still less palatable from the pen of an 'armchair intellectual'.

However, if Arthur Scargill's leadership is flawed, as Kellner believes, then to deny this and offer sycophantic and uncritical commentary seems a poor way to serve the best interests of the labour movement.

Miners appeal nets £2,600

B.J. Draycott, Leicestershire Striking Miners Fund

On behalf of the Leicestershire Striking Miners, it gives me great pleasure in writing this letter. From making my first appeal in August for beneficial help for our families, I am pleased to tell you that up till the start of November *NS* readers have donated in value just over £2,600. Help has been sent from all areas of Great Britain and overseas, mainly the USA, Canada, Australia. We say a very sincere thank you to all who have been so generous in solidarity with us.

With Christmas a few weeks away the Coal Board's psychologists must be working overtime in finding ways of breaking us through our children: first, saying no more negotiation and then an offer of our own money — just before Christmas after eight months on strike. It shows how low desperate people are prepared to sink to defeat the NUM.

The pressure on us now is unbelievable. You can help cushion us over Christmas. Wherever you are please help. Send cheques payable to Leicestershire Striking Miners Fund, c/o Editorial Dept, *New Statesman.*

Radio 3: Everyman replies

Ian McIntyre, Controller, Radio 3, BBC

I was very grateful for the generous space you gave to Anne Karpf's version of my Johnian Society lecture (*NS* 23 November). Miss Karpf turns an imaginative phrase. I think my favourite was 'Cultural imperialism dresses up as Everyman'. Heady stuff, that, for a country boy from Scotland driven south in search of work.

May I correct one misreading of my text? 'Not surprisingly, he wants broadcasters to "stand apart" from the social order.' I didn't actually say that. What I did say was that the universities and the broadcasting organisations are both rooted in the general social order, and must be responsible to public needs and the public mood. I then added that neither can discharge its functions properly unless in certain ways they stand apart.

It is not, in any case, a question of what I want but of what the law requires. If Miss Karpf disagrees with present arrangements for securing impartiality in matters of public policy her quarrel is with the Queen in Council and with Parliament. I didn't draft the Broadcasting Act or the Charter and Licence. I do subscribe to their provisions, though.

David and the BBC

Rt Hon. David Steel MP, House of Commons

Sorry to kick away one of the two pillars on which Peter Kellner based his page on the Alliance (*NS* 23 November), but he should know by now that the cock-up theory of politics usually triumphs over the conspiracy theory.

So it was with the lack of the 'two Davids' picture at the end of my last party political broadcast. When I left the recording studio in the afternoon I can assure you it was definitely there. In the course of editing by the BBC, it was found in the evening for technical reasons to be impossible to put in. I was unaware of this until after it was screened, and was dismayed that this should have happened.

Mr Kellner may continue to 'wish the Alliance ill', but he will need stronger evidence than this, and he should not so lose his objectivity as to demote our candidates to 'third place'. We lost only 11 deposits in the last general election compared with Labour's 119; we are second to the Tories in more seats than Labour.

Lowly folk?

Roy Palmer, Birmingham

Naseem Khan's sympathetic article (*NS* 23 November) on the work of the English Folk Dance and Song Society points out that 'the position of folk in the official arts pantheon of Britain is a lowly one', and adds that 'there is little media coverage'. May I ask when the *New Statesman* last reviewed a folk concert, record or book, or printed a piece on folklore or tradition?

The 'ballot' chorus is singing flat

Vic Bretman, Buntingford, Herts.

Why does Islander (*NS* 23 November) join the 'ballot' chorus? What purpose would it serve or have served, other than being a red herring?

The only group not clamouring for a ballot are the very people central to the strike — those who are suffering deprivation for a cause. Either you are with these people and you denounce the diversionary tactics of the media or you back those whose ultimate aim is to return the mines to private 'enterprise'.

It is not lack of conviction which is making miners return to work, but hardship — a point that should not be overlooked by those who talk of democratic ballots. Freedom is measured by financial resources.

We should be speaking with one voice on this issue — for or against. Are the strikers right or wrong? We must not be mealy-mouthed. The Opposition has a lot to learn from Mrs Thatcher.

FEEDBACK

History and the Punjab

WHAT A PITY that Amrit Wilson's analysis of the recent events in India (*NS* 16 November) is a curious mixture of fact and ill substantiated opinion. Ms Wilson has got the sequence of events right, but she has tried to fit them into the straitjacket of political manipulation by Mrs Gandhi on one hand and class conflict on the other, quite ignoring the history of the emergence of the state of Punjab.

Political manoeuvring is not unknown in any state; it does influence the course of history and elections in particular — consider the 'Falklands factor'. And we do have class struggle in India; the Naxalite movement in Bengal and Andhra Pradesh are witness to powerful expressions of such struggle. But, contrary to Ms Wilson's assertion, the Punjab has never been in the mainstream of 'traditionally strong and active left groups and democratic movement'. There has been 'intellectual' dissent, and a very old and well established nationalist impulse but Punjab, essentially, has been preoccupied with other revolutions. Mrs Gandhi's strategy of turning genuine clashes of class interest into caste or communal issues is relevant in other states, such as Assam, where the issue was an ethnic one related to employment and opportunity and not the influx of Bengalis, whether they be Hindus or Muslims. But to attribute the Sikh agitation today to class conflict is to distort the issue and to be blinkered to the history of the Punjab, and the Punjabi (not just the Sikh) character.

The origins of this Punjabi identity are condescendingly admitted by Ms Wilson — 'Hindus and Sikhs have always lived in communal harmony, indeed they had intermarried and in some Punjabi Hindu families the eldest son had traditionally become a Sikh'. This was because the Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, had held that every Hindu family should have at least one Sikh son to strengthen the joint fight against the Muslim rulers, and it is since then that there has been a bond between the two communities. In much more recent times, when the British were trying to parcel out the country into two nations, the assembly of the province of the Punjab (composed of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus) voted not to be split into separate Indian and Pakistani states. The assembly in Bengal decided the opposite and East Bengal (later Bangladesh) was created. But Punjab voted to remain together as one entity, and yet at Partition was split into an Indian and a Pakistan version.

Ms Wilson goes on to say that the recent violence against the Sikh is a logical result of 'Mrs Gandhi's control of the electorate. Her strategy was to manipulate genuine clashes of class interest . . . and turn them into caste or communal issues'. I would like to propose that the present demand for a Sikh state has a much more complex origin. As she quite rightly explains, the demand for a Punjab-speaking state (not a Sikh one) was one that was supported by all Punjabis originally. It was the result of a specific Punjabi consciousness that endures today that perhaps threatened the hold of the central government. Hindus were encouraged to put Hindi as their mother tongue and thus create a smaller and truncated Punjab. Thus was the state of Himachal Pradesh created, a state whose people (some Punjabis claim) speak a dialect of Punjabi, and the state of Haryana.

It is in the tactics of splitting the *Punjabis* that religious sentiments were appealed to, with murderous consequences. Mrs Gandhi's strategy of countering Akali demands by promoting Bhindranwale led to deep divisions between the Hindus and Sikhs and the western media has now been saturated with the atrocities perpetrated on the Sikhs. Very few people have looked beyond those atrocities to see what the response of the Punjabi community at large has been. It is not comfortable to acknowledge that such an identity endures — that in those areas in New Delhi where there was a large Punjabi population, composed of both Hindus and Sikhs, no Sikhs came to any harm. It was in the non-Punjabi areas, the Hindi-dominated regions, that the Sikh community suffered.

The battleground of the Punjab today thus cannot be defined solely by the narrow confines of class struggle. Religious conflict has become the central element, but we now have to consider the ways in which Punjabis can live together in peace and whether the state can support this special identity against that of warring communities.

Uma Ram Nath

Uma Ram Nath is a journalist who writes about the Third World.

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'One country, two systems'

Terry Eagleton goes to China and finds that Kramer versus Kramer *is a best seller, the feminist dawn is only a glimmer and the tanks are 'tatty'. What conflicts lie ahead between state socialism, Hong Kong capitalism and a rigid social order?*

All photos: Lester Cheeseman

'Carry out birth control and ensure happiness for the next generation' (top right); 'For happiness today and a beautiful tomorrow' (right) have one child per family; above: *Doctor Edwards*, an American film showing in Shanghai, 1983

A SOLITARY portrait of Mao Zedong smiles down from above the entrance to the Forbidden City in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. It is the last remaining public portrait of Mao in the city, and a subtle reminder of all the others which aren't there. The Great Helmsman himself, glazed and pickled, lies in his mausoleum a few hundred yards away — 'gone to Marx', as he used to say. His official rating with the present regime — 70 per cent great revolutionary, 30 per cent incorrect — is one he shares with Stalin. As Samuel Beckett said about one of the two Calvary thieves being saved, it's a reasonable percentage.

China's intellectuals are breathing again, after the 'disaster' (the State's own word for it) of a cultural revolution during which they were forced to eat shit, drink latrine water, wear their 'rightist' caps or feed pigs down in the countryside. One literature department in Beijing reckons that of 150 members at the time it lost ten by suicide and another 40 by sundry houndings and beatings. The survivors are mostly stoical: students couldn't always help being Red Guards, they point out, and many resented their education being interrupted by incessant political meetings.

The effects of that erratic education still show: out in the provinces you can find teachers of English whose grasp of the language is about as firm as a native 5 year old's. Asked what was a good period for them, the intellectuals pause, ponder hard and venture '1956', or perhaps '1964-5'. Top professors can still earn less than taxi drivers, and inhabit cramped apartments with only sporadic hot water; distinguished septuagenarian translators of Homer or Mallarmé cycle miles to work through Beijing's hair-raising traffic (40 cyclist fatalities a month, and a near-miss a minute). But Deng Xiaoping's new 'open door' policy to the West is greatly to their taste.

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Ten years ago, everything from Shakespeare to Joyce was denounced as 'ghosts and monsters'; now *Jaws, Roots* and *Kramer versus Kramer* are best sellers. Students read Wesker, Nabokov and the Merseyside poets, and are eager for the latest cultural news from abroad. Is structuralism still alive? Is there any good feminist criticism of the Brontës? What are Raymond Williams and Adrian Mitchell writing now? Western books are still in short supply, despite China's immense hoard of foreign reserves; the traditional Chinese respect for the aged can mean that while senior academics syphon off money for trips to the West (in one case at least with an embassy Rolls waiting on the Heathrow tarmac), their junior colleagues are forced to cyclostyle chapters of a Western novel for their students from a single dog-eared copy. Young PhD students earn less than their institute's driver but, China's need for specialists being what it is, almost all of them will be kept on by their university department as teachers. They have what the Chinese call an 'iron rice bowl', and greet tales of Western postgraduate unemployment with polite incomprehension.

Chinese students are eager to know 'Is structuralism still alive? Is there any good feminist criticism of the Brontës?' What are Raymond Williams and Adrian Mitchell writing now?

Increasing numbers of young Chinese academics now visit the West. At first many of them gravitate automatically towards the most senior professors, only to discover that age and wisdom don't always mix. Some get themselves to Australia, and return slightly stunned by its social informality. Western academics visiting China are likely to be politely presented with pirated translations of their own works. But the monitoring of the imperialist heartlands goes well beyond academic issues: Arthur Scargill's name is by no means unknown in the People's Republic.

Westerners tempted to China by this reorientation, however, are likely to come unstuck if they travel as individual tourists, a category the Chinese find as esoteric as bacon and eggs. You can book a hotel room in Beijing as part of an organised group or on the old boy network, but those who stroll in from nowhere asking for a bed are likely to end up

Lester Cheeseman

'What is pornography?' bemused young Chinese women ask of visiting feminists. They are still severely discriminated against in seeking their share of higher education.

phoning the British consul. Booking a hotel is a complex state-bureaucratic operation: the Chinese need to have you sociologically pigeonholed, so that even ringing a taxi involves stating your nationality, group membership and whatever else allows them to take a fix on you. Internal air flights, for which the Chinese themselves need a letter of permission to travel from the head of their unit, are liable to abrupt cancellation. There are two classes of rail travel — hard and soft seats — and some Chinese, concerned for the comfort of the foreign backside, find the sight of overseas visitors occupying the former kind deeply disturbing.

WILL THE new liberalisation, described by Deng as an irreversible law of history, actually last? Nobody can be too confident, remembering the 'hundred flowers' debacle of the late 1950s, when the frail blooms of comradely criticism of the State were allowed to flourish for about six weeks before being nipped brutally in the bud. But the peasantry are enthusiastic about Deng's policies, and there could be few better guarantees than that. The farmers are certainly doing well for themselves, with their 'responsibility plots' (a polite name for private enterprise) leading to an estimated 136 per cent rise in income over the past few years. Rumour has it that a cucumber farmer raking in $3000 a year (several times Deng's salary) recently marched muddy-booted into Beijing's Great Wall hotel (where they serve a classy Mongolian lamb stew) and ordered the Imperial suite. He got it too.

Urban workers' income is officially said to have risen by 46 per cent over the past six years. The only real danger to the new regime, so one is told, is from a frustrated, still youngish layer of the party who thrived under the Gang of Four, diehards who object to words like 'alienation' since nobody can be alienated under socialism. The new 'rectification' drive within the party is directed at weeding them out, and its 'peaceable' spirit is proudly contrasted with the violent humiliations of the recent past. Fewer students join the party these days, as it brings fewer benefits; those whose applications are successful might celebrate by handing round candies in class, more like joining an elite social club than a revolutionary vanguard. The official jargon for joining the party is

The official jargon for joining the party — which fewer now do, since the benefits are less — is 'solving organisational problems'; 'solving personal problems' is what we know in the West as marriage

'solving organisational problems'; 'solving personal problems' is what we know in the West as marriage.

The cult of the foreigner thrives. 'We have friends all over the world', proclaims a complacent (or secretly anxious?) notice in the Beijing Hotel, a far cry from the days when the Chinese could point only to one elderly tyrant in Albania. Nowadays they can enumerate Nixon, Pol Pot and Franz-Josef Strauss as well. 'Hello, China's foreign friend', the well-drilled kindergarten children chant at you on the street. To mark the anniversary of the founding of the republic, the State threw a banquet for over 1000 'foreign experts and friends' in

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Lester Cheeseman

'Long live the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line' (1967) — but that line didn't last long, and political fashion now takes account of the Western cut

the Great Hall of the People, hosted by the Vice-Premier. Like all Chinese banquets it was a brief, efficiently executed affair: a few quick toasts and speeches (the political rhetoric carefully toned down for Western taste), ten speedy courses and everyone bundled back into their cars by 9pm. One could imagine the next thousand experts being ushered in simultaneously by the back door. The wilier Westerners knew not to overdress: jeans and sweaters are quite acceptable even at State banquet level, and a recent move to introduce ties for Chinese men is generally resented. You can, however, buy a Great Wall tee-shirt, announcing that you have walked on the only human structure visible from the moon.

Impeccably hospitable, the Chinese give their foreign guests what in Britain would be an indifferent sort of council flat. This is VIP treatment in a country where a married couple must live in a single small room, and can gain an extra one only by having a child (not the best incentive to contraception). In the Beijing zoo, where the pandas recline in unnervingly human postures, chewing bamboo shoots like sybaritic emperors, they are considering building special lavatories for foreigners, embarrassed by the native facilities. A good restaurant might even keep some milk for overseas customers, a drink which the Chinese themselves treat much like poison.

The National Day celebrations on 2 October to mark the foundation of the people's republic were also, of course, mainly for foreign consumption. The 35th anniversary was chosen for celebrating partly because some of the more venerable cadres are unlikely to be around for the 40th. The half-a-million strong march-past in the Tiananmen Square was superbly organised, right down to the 128 magpies released into the air and whistled back again by two tamers concealed in a float.

It was what the Chinese call a 'red red green green' (ie colourful) affair, though the tanks were all a little tatty. One float displayed a gigantic, grossly overweight baby doll, symbol of the new one-child-per-family policy; another showed a group of intrepid mountaineers rescuing some injured comrades, symbolic of socialist selflessness. The cost of the whole gig was rumoured to be around 1,750 million yuan equivalent to China's annual educational budget. Some of the cyclostyling teachers were less than enthusiastic, as were the students called out of class for weeks beforehand to rehearse standing in mass ranks to form the magic numbers 1949-1984.

THE NEW REGIME encourages a degree of public criticism. You can speak up in the newspapers for the non-decadent nature of discos, and the old Stalinist images of the superhuman worker are now actively discouraged. Even so, routine social life remains deeply regimented. Everyone in China works and lives in a 'unit'. If your spouse works in a unit in another city the State will pay for one connubial visit a year. You may pay for one more visit yourself, if you have the money and your unit will grant you leave. There is little hope of ever being transferred from one unit or city to another, not least if the city is the eminently desirable Beijing.

If you are college students in love, the only way to ensure that you are both assigned after graduation to the same city is to get married. The only snag with this is that college students are not allowed to marry. Husbands obviously cannot choose not to work in order to be with their wives, but neither can wives. For internal travel the Chinese need a letter of permission from the head of their unit; to relax such restrictions, the party argues, would cause chaos in a population of one billion. If married couples were given special privileges to travel, the result (so it is claimed) would be millions of marriages of convenience and a consequent rise in population. The party appears unimpressed by the case that free travel elsewhere in the world does not result in frantic hordes milling to and fro, incessantly coupling.

'What is pornography?' two bemused young Chinese women asked a visiting Western feminist. Despite this happy ignorance, the feminist millennium has not quite dawned in the East. The separated couples policy produces millions of what are in effect single parent families, with the children always left to the mother. Women form only 26 per cent of the student population, and in some colleges have to score a good many more examination points than men in order to be admitted. The State says it is working on this problem.

During the cultural revolution, Mao craftily despatched his Red Guards to the countryside, ostensibly for 're-education', in fact because they were proving a pain in the neck. Many swarmed back into the cities after that period, to create a serious problem of youth unemployment and delinquency; but many others were

For internal travel, the Chinese need a letter of permission. There's little hope of being transferred from one city to another. The party appears unimpressed by the case that free travel elsewhere in the world does not result in frantic hordes milling to and fro, incessantly coupling

trapped down on the farm by Chinese travel restrictions, which was just Mao's intention. Of these, it was mainly the women who were allowed to return, since their families feared for their moral welfare. The result today is an excess of marriageable young women in the cities. Unpredictably, however, the policy of having only one child may prove something of a stimulus to feminist reform, since parents are worried about how one materially underprivileged daughter will be able to care for them in their old age.

As capitalism increasingly penetrates China's economic base, conflicts are likely to emerge between that and the still rigidly authoritarian social superstructure. The Hong Kong settlement, deftly pulled off to coincide with the National Day celebrations, and according to some unofficial Chinese commentators really to do with regaining Taiwan, is now described as a new 'one country, two systems' policy. Having failed with Stalinism, China is now trying capitalism; and if that doesn't work either it might have run out of systems to try. The 'two systems' policy, Hong Kong prostitution cheek to jowl with State control, has been characterised by the leading Chinese economist Xue Muqiao as 'a new development of Marxism'. He can say that again. □

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Happy families

Francis Wheen

THERE IS a species which can only be called the 'Christmas book'. You'd never buy it for yourself; it exists only to be bought by you as a present for other people, or bought by others as a present for you (or, more usually, both at the same time). Last year each of my three dozen aunts gave me *How To Be A Wally* and my condition is still critical as a result. Actually *How To Be A Wally* is a bad example of the *genre* since it managed to be funny despite being a 'Christmas book'. Its sequel, *Superwally!* (Futura, £1.75) is, annoyingly, just as good. If any of my aunts is reading this I'd like to point out that I already have a copy. Meanwhile, here's a guide to the best and worst of the rest.

Books to give to your respectable Uncle Albert and Auntie Winifred

The Way to Lord's: Cricketing Letters to The Times, selected by Marcus Williams (Fontana, £2.95). 'Sir, I think I can tell Mr Michael Vyvyan (3 September) when and where the first cricket match took place in Poland...' Much more in the same vein, including letters from W.G. Grace, Reginald Bosanquet and A.A. Milne. Irresistible.

Great Dining Disasters, by Charles Neilson Gattey (Columbus, £4.95). One day someone may produce a book of anecdotes without using familiar stories about Lady Diana Cooper, Nancy Astor or Noel Coward; but Charles Neilson Gattey is not that someone.

Books to give to your unrespectable Auntie Molly and Uncle Toby

The Joy of Frogs, by Tomi Ungerer (Souvenir, £5.95). Colour illustrations of frogs fucking, not to mention sucking, licking, poking, writhing, coming and going. Why? God knows.

Objets Introuvables: A Catalogue of Unfindable Objects, by Carelman (Muller, £8.95 & £5.95). A modern Heath Robinson. Carelman's fantastic creations include a comb-spoon ('for removing any hairs that fall into the soup') and a free-floating hammock, held aloft by balloons. Great fun.

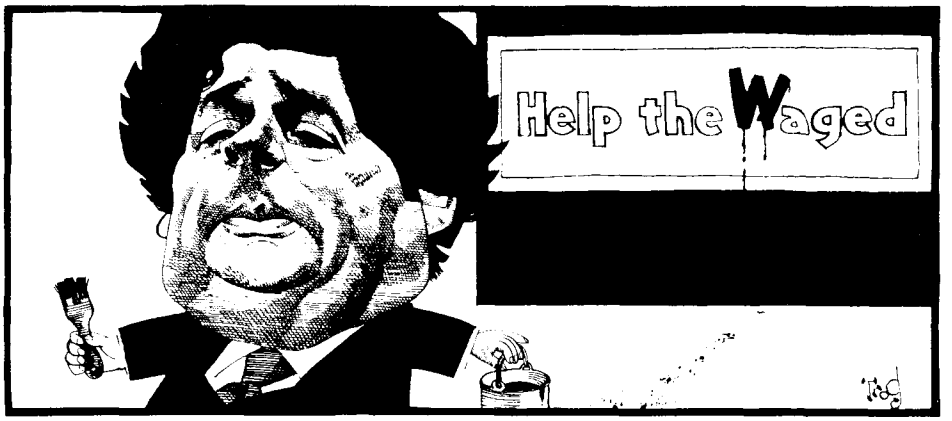
Books to give to your cousin Jemima, who's just joined her first women's group

My Day, by Victoria Roberts (Chatto, £4.95) is like those 'Life in a Day' features in the colour supplements except that (a) it's in the form of comic strips, (b) the subjects are more interesting (Anaïs Nin, Marcel Duchamp, Radclyffe Hall and others) and (c) it's much funnier.

Lucky Bag: The Victoria Wood Song Book (Methuen, £9.95 & £4.95). A treat and a half:

> When I see a child dismember
> Insects, or when I remember
> How I feel
> The day after an Indian meal
> Or when I see a jellied eel
> My darling, I will think of you.

And more of the same, with full piano accompaniment.



Another for parents in the SDP: Wally Fawkes's *Trog Shots* (Patrick Hardy, £1.95) — by what George Melly in his foreword calls an 'old-fashioned... compassionate' cartoonist

Books to give to your cousin Jim, the management trainee who plays darts for the local pub side

Now Here's a Funny Thing, by Brian Johnston (Methuen, £5.95). Johnners is batting on rather a sticky wicket here — sexist jokes, Irish jokes and many other unpleasant gags. Jim'll love it.

The Best Medicine, by Graeme Garden (Robson, £5.95). One surefire way of disarming critics is to print the words 'Royalties to Action Research for the Crippled Child' on the front cover, as Graeme Garden has done with his 'anthology of medical humour'. I'll confine myself to saying that Jim'll love it.

If My Boss Calls... Make Sure You Get His Name, by Roger Collis (Autolycus, £4.95). This is what passes for humour among the kind of people who have Diners' Club cards and subscribe to *Chief Executive* magazine. It is probably tax deductible.

Books to annoy your grandmother, who's just joined the Militant Tendency

The Best of Peter Simple 1980-1984, by Michael Wharton (Telegraph Publications, £4.95). Right-wing drivel which should be enough to ensure a large cheque from your grandmother to the Miners' Support Fund.

The Way We Live Now, by Bernard Levin (Cape, £8.95), should persuade her to double the cheque. The blurb promises us 'the familiar voice delivering ever unpredictable opinions'. Such as? 'Arguments for democracy... condemnation of Mao, Kim Il Sung...' Ah, *those* unpredictable opinions.

Books to annoy your grandfather, who's just become a full colonel in the Salvation Army

Keep Fit With Drink, by Marcel Feigel (Muller, £2.50), is a 'jokey' guide to such exercises as raising the right arm, throwing up and falling over. Negligible rubbish.

Exotic Species: A Field Guide to Some of Our British Gays, by Kate Charlesworth (Gay Men's Press, £1.95). Anyone who read the original *Gay News* will remember Charlesworth's marvellous cigarette card sketches of such creatures as The Adventurer Cruiser and the Virginia Creeper. Stereotypes, of course, but — unlike the characters in Stephen Pickles's nauseating book *Queens* — they're treated affectionately.

Books to give to your parents, who have just joined the SDP after much agonising

The Bedside Guardian 33, edited by W.L. Webb (Collins, £8.95). Mum and dad can relive the past year through the eyes of The Paper That Shopped Sarah Tisdall.

Pick of Posy, by Posy Simmonds (Fontana, £3.50). Will Wendy remember to soak the mung beans? Will George keep patriarchy at bay? Will the twins' costumes be ready in time for the school play? How difficult life is.

Books to give to your nearest and dearest

If... Only Again, by Steve Bell (Methuen, £2.95). Another year's work from the maestro, with guest appearances by Francis the Talking Mule, King Penguin and Michael Heseltine.

Bachelor Boys: The Young Ones Book, by Ben Elton, Rik Mayall and Lise Mayer (Sphere, £2.95). Brill. Triff. A compulsory purchase for juvenile delinquents and Cliff Richard fans (assuming that one is not a sub-set of the other).

The Diary of a Nobody, by George and Weedon Grossmith (Elm Tree, £10.95). As side-splitting as ever and now available in this definitive edition, gorgeously illustrated by Paul Hogarth and Philip Hood. The book that put Holloway on the map.

Life in a Scotch Sitting Room Vol 2, by Ivor Cutler (Methuen, £7.50 & £3.50). Deranged 'memoirs' of a tough Caledonian childhood ('the children micturated on to a large sponge which sat by the window'), complemented by Martin Honeysett's beautifully grotesque illustrations. Could be the cult present of the year. ▷

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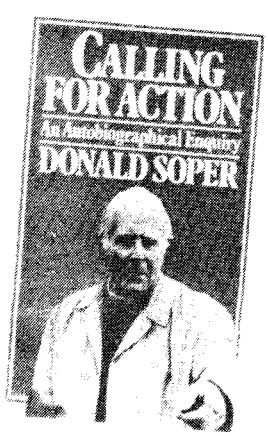

Robson Books,
5-6 Clipstone Street, London W1

Books to pulp and use instead of Polyfilla for household repairs

It's Only You That's Incompatible!, by Mel Calman (Methuen, £2.95). Has *anyone* ever laughed at a Calman cartoon? I think not.

The DeLorean Tapes, by the *Sunday Times* Insight Team (Collins £3.95) isn't meant to be a humorous book but turns out to be so bad that it's almost comic; it's also indicative of the kind of dross that passes for journalism at the *Sunday Times* these days. No fewer than six journalists are credited with having worked on the book, but the text consists of almost nothing except unedited transcripts of DeLorean's phone calls, however uninteresting. Here's a typically thrilling extract:

> *Unidentified woman:* Thank you for calling Atlanta Airport Marriott.
> *Jim Benedict:* Yes, extension 237 please.
> *Woman:* Thank you, have a nice day. *(pause)* That line is busy, do you wish to wait?
> *Benedict:* Uh, yes.

Who needs it?

Books to put beside the lavatory

Peculiar People, by Patrick Donovan (Fontana, £1.75), is sub-titled 'The maddest exploits of the otherwise innocent'. If you want to know that in 1960 Gus Simmons of Chicago sat on a block of ice for 26 hours to win a bet, this is the book for you.

The Cynic's Lexicon: A Dictionary of Amoral Advice, by Jonathon Green (Routledge, £5.95), includes a quote from Dick Cavett which applies to most of the books with which publishers flood the market at this time of year: 'As long as people will accept crap, it will be financially profitable to dispense it.' Just so. □

Connections

Geoff Dyer

And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief As Photos
JOHN BERGER *Writers & Readers*
£6.95 & £4.95

JUST BEFORE the furore of the 1972 Booker Prize, Berger commented to *The Times* on the impulse behind his writing: 'if there is something I half perceive,' he said, 'I find it necessary to put it into prose and make it, therefore, part of our consciousness.' Formulated in trenchant prose these half perceptions had already acquired the weight of contentious certainty in his writings on art. His great ability was to articulate the emotion he felt in front of the canvas so precisely as to make his relationship — one developed from Marxism — with the painting seem definitive.

Nearing 60 and addressing himself to the vaster issues of time and space, Berger is still informed by the same half perceptions and a similar urge to articulate emotions but the formulation is more hesitant. *And Our Faces* (the title comes from one of his poems) has its origins in letters written by Berger and in final form it remains a deeply personal working out of internal contradictions and tensions. But his concerns are ours; there is a continuous traffic between the personal and the universal, between storytelling and metaphysics. Like *Pig Earth* (which it resembles in no other way) the book moves between poetry and prose, between stories and theoretical speculation. The prose has the delicate certainty of intimacy. The poems make a hurrying reader pause. Short sections surround themselves with generous inches of white page. Spacious printing urges us to read slowly, feelingly.

Such a book does not lend itself easily to the gallop of summary but there are two main preoccupations. One is our experience of time, seen by Berger in terms of a conflict between the lived time of the body and the culturally informed time of consciousness. After the French Revolution, he says, history ceased to be the guardian of the past and came to be felt as a force whose laws ushered in the future. Since then our dominant sense has been of ephemerality or, in consumer terms, of obsolescence. The other preoccupation is with migration and exile, developing the themes of *A Seventh Man*, his study of migrant labour. 'Ours has been the century of banishment,' writes Berger and against spatial and temporal displacement he posits the timeless quality of art and the uniting power of love. The book's richness lies in the way these concerns are interwoven with poetic anecdote and myriad observations: on Caravaggio and van Gogh; on railway stations and highland crofts...

With its emphasis on the unchanging emotion of love, *And Our Faces* will be seen by many as a retreat from politics to feeling, from materialism to mystification. Certainly there are passages where Berger seems consciously to have in mind some earlier comments which he now seeks to qualify. In *Ways of Seeing* he stressed that we respond to a painting by Hals, for example, because we still live in a society of comparable social relations. Now he emphasises the way a painting affects us 'when the circumstances surrounding its production (patronage, fashion, ideology) have changed'. In its entirety the passage is both an implicit answer to some of the objections (notably Peter Fuller's) to *Ways of Seeing* and a vivid instance of Berger's gift to evoke the peculiar silence and stillness of great painting.

Not a retreat then but an advance; not a break but a continuation. Perhaps it is the way that these concerns are developed that will surprise. Berger's method in *And Our Faces* is simple but oblique. There is little sense of logically unfolding argument. The relations he sees between things — and these often include causal and historical patterns — tend to form in the reader's mind a complex synchronic pattern. His arguments are contingent rather than consequent.

And this, also, is no surprise since most of these comments were adapted from a passage in his novel *G.*

The real unifying impulse of the book lies less in technique than in its concern with hope and a search for home. Ultimately the hope is that our 'collective conscious presence in history' will come to constitute a home. More immediately, Berger insists that to put into words is itself to 'find the hope that the words will be heard and the events they described judged'. Wishful thinking? An empty gesture? Not really, for although Berger's hopes are poetically expressed there is nothing wistful or

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sentimental about them. The book ends with a Donne-like image of love-in-death that seeks to prove:

> Our almost-instinct almost true:
> What will survive of us is love.

It is odd that Larkin should come to mind but it is the straining sense of 'almost' that stops the gesture (Larkin's, Berger's) becoming empty. Perhaps the 'almost' also explains why, after reading this book three times in a month, my sense of its haunting integrity increases daily. □

Edge of power

Judith Hart

The Castle Diaries 1964-70
BARBARA CASTLE *Weidenfeld* £20

THE FIRST Castle and Crossman diaries had all the fascination of a new *genre*, with their candid and highly personal inside stories of ministerial life and Whitehall conflict. This volume, however, is much more than more of the same. Covering the Sixties, it gives the most valuable insight yet into what went wrong to destroy the cloud nine hopes of the Labour movement after those famous victories of 1964 and 1966. Twenty years is a long time in politics and, for the new generations of activists, the Sixties were a decade of disappointment and disillusion. Its worthy social reforms are steadily and remorselessly undermined and reversed by radical Thatcherism; and the enthusiastic mass support which swept Labour into power has long since been dissipated. Barbara's account of her own life and times offers an understanding of why it is so.

They were the years when she was in charge of transport, where she had notable successes, and trade union policy, where she was extremely controversial. (Sadly, she did not keep her diary when she was setting up the Ministry of Overseas Development — creating a Department almost from scratch, and doing it well, would have been well worth writing about.) The diaries are lengthy, and very detailed indeed in their account of her own activities — she is absorbed in the running of her own departments, admits that ministers are quite uninterested in the minutiae of other people's problems and policies, and thoroughly enjoys it all. With what Dick Crossman describes as 'her unique verve and her energy', she gets things done, and knows it. One minor entry:

> Seat belt testing at the British Standards Laboratory premises at Hemel Hempstead. And another good spate of publicity. The joy of being a Minister is that one can *do* things . . .

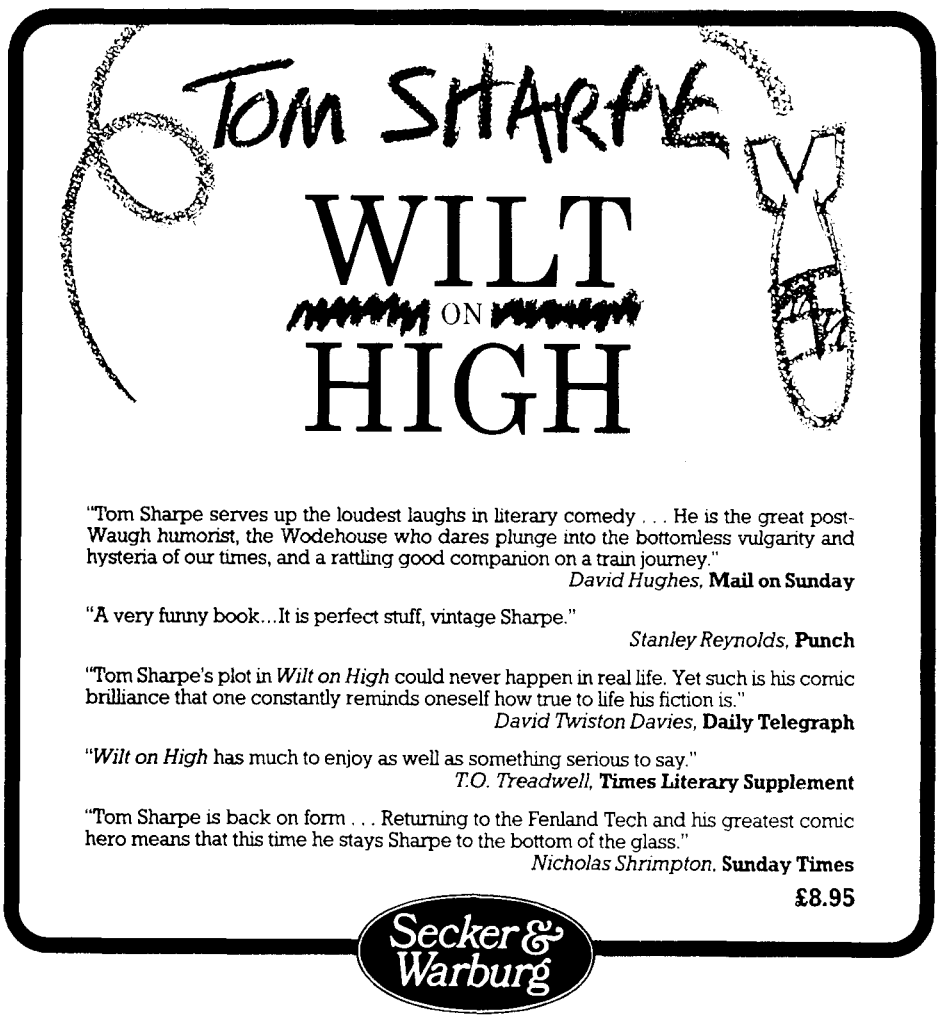
She is a perfectionist in all things, from hair and clothes to parties and her garden, and getting on nicely with the Queen and Jack Jones. But there is no arrogance here. When Harold Wilson puts her in the Cabinet in 1964, she is surprised and flattered, and when her DEP job makes her First Secretary, with a far higher pecking order in the Cabinet, she is absolutely delighted. Indeed, one is left with an awareness that she consistently under-rated her own very real importance in those years when she was riding so high, in the country and in Labour Party affections. When it is suggested to her (not by me, although it has long been my view) that she would be a good Foreign Secretary, she is genuinely and modestly surprised. She would also have been a first rate Chancellor.

And here lies one of the most important clues to what went wrong in those years. The key top posts of the Treasury, the Foreign Office and the Home Office in Labour Governments since 1964 have always been held by the Right, so far to the Right that one numbers among them eminent departures to the SDP. It is no way to run a government with pretensions to socialism. For if basic economic and foreign policies cannot command the loyalty or, at the very least, the understanding of the movement, there is no hope for us. These diaries spell out all too clearly that even a senior Minister with a passionate concern about both, hardworking enough to read the Cabinet papers and committed enough to spend that precious commodity of time discussing crisis issues with like-minded colleagues (they were thin on the ground), could not get remotely near the centre of decision-making.

Over and over again, the leftish Ministers, so much more loyal, always, than the others, try to force the fundamental policy issues into the open debate of Cabinet; over and over again they find they are dealing only with the *post hoc* peripheral consequences of decisions already settled in inner circles. And, of course, such is the structure of the Cabinet Committee system that they do not even see the papers which go to the key Committees of which they are not themselves members.

Mark Haddon

Thus Barbara was never near to the Rhodesia question; or the Vietnam policies; or disarmament; or the Common Market. All of these crucial questions were played very close to



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Nicholas Shrimpton, **Sunday Times**

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the chest, in extremely restricted Committees. By the time they came to Cabinet, it was a matter of reporting rather than decision-making. She queried, and fussed, and challenged — and the three or four who agreed with her were also remote from the centre of power. Yet these were matters of enormous sensitivity for the Party. On each of them, the policies were wrong, or confused, or timid. But consider the men in charge — Patrick Gordon-Walker, Michael Stewart, George Brown. Is it surprising?

The economic policies were even more beyond influence. The decision that the defence of sterling was 'my Government's first concern', as it was expressed in the first Queen's Speech, was taken by a Wilson-Callaghan-Brown cabal two days after the 1964 election. It left the Labour Government, facing a colossal deficit in the balance of payments bequeathed by Reggie Maudling, at the mercy of the City. Those were the years of whispered conversation in the corridors, never to be overheard, about the pound and, the word never to be spoken: devaluation. So the Cabinet debates were about the agonies of how to deflate and where to cut public expenditure. 'I am in despair over our economic policy,' says Barbara in June 1967. And she tried — the dissidents all tried — to open up the issue of devaluation instead of deflation. In the end, we had both.

But what about *In Place of Strife*? Was that not a further major factor in the steady decay of enthusiasm and confidence? How it happened, and why, is all here — and I must say, as one who profoundly disagreed with it, that there is a sense of living on another planet to read her contemporary account of the whole affair, and of Mr Solomon-Binding. It was Barbara's misfortune to be given perhaps the one post in government which was totally unsuited to her flair and her background. However, the historians will have a happy time mulling over the several varying versions of events.

The trouble about the idea that one can learn from other people's mistakes is that people usually don't. In 1970, Harold Wilson agrees that it is to be a 'Presidential election', with the disastrous results which followed. The Whitehall system is even more presidential now, under Thatcher. To learn how to lose an election, and how to lose the ethos of the Labour Party, I hope Neil Kinnock finds time to read Barbara's diaries. □

Composure

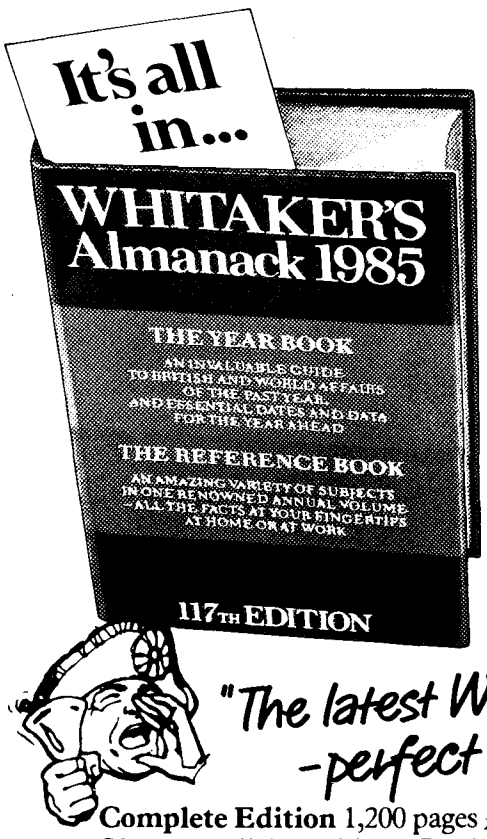
Andrew Clements

1985 IS THE tercentenary of the births of Handel, J.S. Bach and Domenico Scarlatti. The signs are that Handel is going to get the main share of the celebrations in Britain at least, and already the music-book publishers have set out their stalls. Two new books, covering almost the same ground, attempt to set Handel in his cultural and historical context: **Handel** by Christopher Hogwood (Thames & Hudson, £12.95) is a solid-looking study, packed with information and a fine selection of illustrations; **Handel and his World** by H. C. Robbins Landon (Weidenfeld, £12.95) has the demeanour and design of a popular biography.

Hogwood has indeed assembled a wealth of detail; he has made use of the full range of modern scholarship to reprint a large number of contemporary documents. Yet the result is curiously flavourless; the author keeps his own views firmly in the background, very rarely venturing an opinion and confining his discussion of the music to superficial observations. As one would expect from a musician whose own performances are scrupulous in their fidelity to manuscript sources, he carefully chronicles Handel's own recycling of material through a variety of work, but never goes into any specific musical discussion. Robbins Landon similarly steers clear of specifics and favours more vivid description and some glossy plates over copious documentation; his is undoubtedly the more readable, yet in some ways the less useful account. What neither book provides is the rounded study of Handel so badly needed. The documents have been painstakingly winnowed in any number of scholarly studies; it is on those indeed that both Hogwood and Robbins Landon are able to draw. Otto Erich Deutsch's documentary biography published in 1954 may now be thoroughly out of date, but the more recent material is readily available to those who require it. For an introduction to the music which is aware of modern scholarship the general reader will still look in vain; doubtless there will be some attempt to fill the niche before the anniversary year is past.

The trend in recent volumes of Dent's Master Musicians series appears to be towards that synthesis of up-to-date research and standard musico-biographical treatment. How far the concept has moved from the old 'life and works' format is demonstrated by Barry Millington's **Wagner** (Dent, £12) which in its closely argued and most careful discussion does not appear to be aimed at the newcomer to Wagner but at those who know the life and the music dramas in broad outline and now require a more discriminating approach. Millington has gone to considerable lengths to disentangle the bundle of myths that continue to surround the composer's life and beliefs, his treatment of Wagner's anti-Semitism is most convincing, as is his frank history of Bayreuth in the 20th century. The biography, it must be said, reads more easily and informatively than the section on the works, where there is a tendency to discuss technical points as if abstracted from the work as a piece of living, breathing theatre. Millington does not waste space on the plots of each of the operas, but the clipped, shorthand style he adopts seems to presuppose a very detailed fore-knowledge. Despite that, however, it remains a useful addition to the study of a composer who has attracted too many fatuous commentaries.

The new volume on **Bartók** (Dent Master Musicians, £10.95) by Paul Griffiths is closer to the standard style and level, though life and music are interwoven most satisfyingly. 'No other twentieth-century composer, not even Webern or Schoenberg, has been subjected to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such manifold scrutiny,' says Griffiths, in a pithy epilogue dealing with Bartók's posthumous influence. Yet, as with Handel, there was a lack of an up-to-date study in English which covered the whole body of his music, and that is precisely what Griffiths enthusiastically provides. His discussion of the nature of Bartók's radicalism and the origins of his musical language unfailingly crystallises the salient features, while his view of the final, apparently more conservative works is refreshingly unassertive: 'the lack of other works from this period must leave it an open question whether the Third Piano Concerto embodies some musical transcendence Bartók achieved at the end of his life. A movement, even a page from the projected Seventh Quartet might speak volumes here.'

The Britten Companion edited by Christopher Palmer (Faber, £25 & £9.95) fills no obvious gap in our knowledge. The Britten bibliography threatens to get out of hand even before any part of Donald Mitchell's authorised biography appears. Parts of the new collection, however, are fine-grained studies in their own right. Robin Holloway's discussion of the church parables is characteristically compelling; so are Wilfrid Mellers's essays on *Turn of the Screw* and *Noye's Fludde*, and Donald Mitchell's introductory 'What do we know about Britten now?'. Philip Brett's analysis of *Billy Budd* follows upon his splendid monograph on *Peter Grimes* published last year by Cambridge University Press — in the later opera 'tragedy is purified and made transcendental'. Unfortunately, the editor's own contributions are less interesting and, since he takes on the orchestral works and orchestral song cycles as well as the main study of *Peter Grimes*, this makes the coverage decidedly uneven. Palmer has a tendency to reduce his commentary to the level of superior programme notes, and to skate over music which merits detailed discussion. For the Britten addict, however, the volume contains some fascinating nuggets of information as well as providing a handy source for a number of previously published articles now resurrected.

Anthony Payne's **Frank Bridge: Radical and Conservative** (Thames Publishing, £7.50) is a reworking of an earlier slender volume that benefits from the increased availability of many scores and a growing number of performances. The revised version is equally slender but densely packed, and confines itself strictly to the music. Payne's attitude to Bridge has undergone a sea change since he first tackled the subject: some of the later, radically chromatic works which non-specialists such as I find fascinating he thinks partially 'flawed', while the early, and to my mind far less distinctive 'Edwardian' pieces have 'yielded increasingly rewarding experiences'. I hope that such a re-evaluation

Elizabeth Jennings

Dawn not yet

Dawn not yet and the night still holding sleepers
Closed in dreams, clams in shelter, a hiding
Of half the world and men turned back into

Primaeval matter. A closed world only tides
Ruminate over. Here men could be fossils
Embedded in strata, all to be discovered

By morning, skilful archaeologist
Cutting down carefully, drawing up debris
Of centuries but also precious gems,

Ivory figurines, kings' hoards. We are shown
Riches the sun at last gives shape and glint to.
Sun the explorer, sun the diver too.

The sea is quiet. No bells from church or harbour,
Slow off-white sky. A healing time, right peace
Where monks sing hours somewhere, where small waves settle

As if to hush before the general sleep,
As if to hold the waking worries back.
Sea-gulls are swinging softly through the sky.

Almost six and light is spreading now,
Soon the many waking, soon the powers
We cannot handle will make their demands

But now is silence, stillness everywhere
And the good night still holds us in its hands.

ff
faber and faber

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does not serve to consign Bridge to the category of 'English' composer so vociferously championed by a noisy band of supporters; his best music deserves a far less narrow context.

Finally, the first volume of Aaron Copland's autobiography, **Copland** (Faber, £18.50) prepared by the composer together with the critic and writer Vivian Perlis, offers a fascinating and sometimes wry look at one side, the neoclassical tradition, of 20th-century music.

Perlis has exercised an artful control over the structure of the book: she provides an introduction and a series of historical interludes which set Copland's taped reminiscences in context, and has solicited brief contributions from a number of those musicians closely connected with him to provide corroboration and sometimes sly glosses on his narrative. It is an unfailingly mellow, witty text, generously larded with photographs, manuscripts and letters.

Most fascinating of all is the passage in which Copland recalls his years of study with Nadia Boulanger, high priestess of neoclassicism, and whom he refers to throughout as 'Mademoiselle', while his testimonial for the conductor Serge Koussevitsky is warm and grateful. Copland has kept a beady eye on the progress of music for well over half a century, and the second volume promises both entertainment and enlightenment more or less in equal measure. □

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FICTION

From the ghetto

Adrianne Blue

Sent For You Yesterday
JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN *Allison & Busby* £7.95
Leaving the Land
DOUGLAS UNGER *Heinemann* £9.95
Three Women
DAPHNE GLAZER *Piatkus* £8.50
Five Rehearsals
SUSANNA JOHNSTON *Chatto* £8.95

THE AMERICAN DREAM, which we have all been chortling at lo these many years, has come true for John Edgar Wideman. Not the vulgar version of the dream, not the big chromey car and the brassy blonde on your knee. No, the dream of the intelligentsia.

Wideman was reared in the wine-and-smack-soaked black ghetto of Pittsburgh, the son of a self-respecting waiter. His brother is a convict serving a life term in a Pennsylvania penitentiary, but Wideman himself studied 18th-century literature at Oxford, as only the second black Rhodes scholar ever, and he teaches English and *Afro-American* literature at a very white university. No Uncle Tom he.

More important even than that, **Sent For You Yesterday**, his sixth novel, which is set in that same black ghetto called Homewood, is a fine and funny book, one that can make a hard-bitten reviewer cry. Wideman's technical control of his prose is extraordinary too. The book is written in what once we called substandard English; then dialect; now, more respectably, Black American English. It is kin to the language of *The Colour Purple* — and as accessible — but tells a truer, less sentimental tale. Both books are being hailed as highpoints in the Black renaissance in American literature and it is true that black writers are now beginning to get their due. But Wideman, like Alice Walker, stems from the wider tradition of Mark Twain and John Steinbeck, writers of lavish, supple, compelling colloquial prose.

Rather like Steinbeck, who gave voice to poor whites, hayseeds, the mute Milton migrant farm workers, Wideman gives us poor blacks, but urbanites, mute Count Basies and Bessie Smiths. Uncle Remus is there too: a dark night is 'blacker than the rent man's heart when you ain't got a dime'. The novel embraces 30 years in the lives of two proud but poor families. In the harsh, down-at-the-heel ghetto, there is the tender moment when a boy loses his virginity, the stark one when a woman saves her husband from murder and, above all, Albert Wilkes, the coolly 'uppity nigger' piano player who fucks a white woman and kills the white policeman who gets mad about it while the ghetto awaits and bemoans his impending comeuppance.

Leaving the Land is also dirty realism, a vivid and detailed depiction of the yearnings and attainments of a Dakota farmer's daughter. Unger's grip is firm for only half of this his first novel, then we stop caring that Marge Hogan has turned her back on the amiable studs her own age and married a 40-year-old lawyer with dentures. Better than Flaubert, though, in making us believe why a young woman's fancy might turn away: 'Her nostrils filled with the acrid odors of sweat and shaving lotion. Her lips recoiled at the bitter tastes of beer, smoking, cheap whiskey . . . She felt a film of hair oil on her face and hands.'

Three Women, more a precis of a novel than a finished one, does, however, ably show us the converse, a woman fancying but, interestingly, not at all interested in true love: 'She had wanted to be touching him every moment, running her fingertips through his hair, putting her tongue in his ears . . . Oh, she had loved his smell . . . Juices had filled her mouth and the area between her legs . . . But basically she had not wanted to know him.'

Private Eye has given **Five Rehearsals** a kind of celebrity as a *roman à clef*. One Geoffrey Wheatcroft is said to be the rotter the novel is about. Well, if so, may the susceptible be warned. As an egotistical, wilful, sexy, German-Jewish film director in the novel, he is as magnetic as he is unloveable. The heroine, moneyed but nice, biographically quite akin to Susanna Johnston, has the misfortune to be obsessed with him. And though this 150-page novel is rather rough-hewn, it is entirely readable. Fifty or so pages more, though, would have made even more of the Tuscan scenery, the genial gay uncle, the lover who makes her fetch and carry and massage until she gets into a blazing rage and puts fire to his clothes. □

Silly question

John Spurling

SUZI GABLIK begins her sermon **Has Modernism Failed?** (Thames & Hudson, £10) — it is essentially that — with some statistics. In 1952, she tells us, 'there were only about 50 modern artists living in New York, who depended mostly on each other for support, and less than 20 galleries'. Thirty years later the Summer Gallery Guide listed 14,000 artists with gallery affiliations. Art, she reckons, has ceased to be rebellious and adventurous and made its peace with the world of late capitalism, the artists themselves aiming for the same rewards as all the other successful members of our consumer society: fame, cash and the comfortable life of the upper bourgeoisie. The idealistic mystique that seemed for a time to be the natural successor to religion has declined into a professional career organised by dealers, who in their desperate search for new products will even go out and fetch into their galleries the young graffiti vandals from the subway.

Gablik's thesis has the pleasing and intermittently entertaining simplicity of all such generalities, offering what journalists — or at least their editors — always appreciate when dealing with subjects as slippery and marginal as the arts: a brisk, sufficiently well-informed and well-argued report of where we are now. But are we? She purports to deal with art in the West, but although she throws in one or two European names she is really concerned exclusively with the art-world in New York. In her last chapter she cites two contemporary

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Europeans — Anselm Kiefer and Joseph Beuys — of whom she approves because, unlike the Schnabels, Salles, Warhols and graffiti-boys of New York, they are trying to regain 'the spiritual dignity of art'. I could cite her quite a long list of British artists whose work has never lost its spiritual dignity.

It is certainly true that art here — as in New York though on a smaller scale — has been turned into a commercial commodity, with dealers, sponsors, curators and some of the more meretricious artists exploiting it for their own purposes of profit, advertisement and self-advancement. But the evidence of it also being what it always was in the right hands, a sophisticated and engrossing form of exploration, perception and communication, is constantly available in studios, galleries and public collections. No doubt it is there in New York too if Gablik looked more carefully. But the very title and theme of her book suggest how absurdly theoretical and superficial her whole approach is. Has Modernism failed? Has Impressionism, has the Renaissance failed? It is a meaningless question, unless you regard art as a proselytising faith, a social lever or a commercial product.

It's refreshing to turn to Dore Ashton's **About Rothko** (Oxford, £15). The long trial in which Rothko's dealer and some of his friends were discovered to have made off after his death with most of his paintings was of course an outstanding example of the commodity market at work, but Ashton boldly ignores it. It has been fully covered already and she is concerned to discuss the Rothko who, before his posthumous notoriety as a product, was an artist almost synonymous with spiritual dignity. 'Art to me,' he wrote, 'is an anecdote of the spirit, and the only means of making concrete the purpose of its varied quickness and stillness.' Ashton herself is one of those rare commentators — Kenneth Clark was another — who writes without either mystifying or condescending and whose lightly-worn learning persistently stimulates the reader's interest not only in the main subject but in all the byways leading in and out of it. Whether you are one of those who are immediately struck all of a heap by Rothko's work and simply want to know why or somebody who doubts the value of these huge effusions of colour, Ashton supplies the details of what went into them.

Rothko always maintained that he was a self-taught artist, although after he dropped out of Yale he enrolled in the Art Students' League and learnt much from the expressionist Max Weber. What Rothko meant was that his art evolved less from a technical training than from his own passionate response to certain artists (Fra Angelico, Rembrandt, Rouault, Matisse and the Surrealists among them), philosophy (especially Nietzsche and Kierkegaard), music (especially Mozart's operas), literature and drama (Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Eliot and Aeschylus), the social and political conditions of the Thirties (though he detested social realism in art) and the company of fellow American artists such as Milton Avery, Barnett Newman and Adolph Gottlieb. Art for Rothko, as Ashton demonstrates, constituted a moral universe and she quotes the poet Stanley Kunitz with whom Rothko had long conversations:

> The world is defended by art, made more livable because art does deal with pleasure. It gives us the image of Eden, the idea, the beautiful. Art, by setting up the ideal makes man discontented with less than the ideal.

There is a curious similarity between Anthony Green's paintings (**A Green Part of the World**, ed. Martin Bailey, Thames & Hudson, £6.95) and David Hockney's recent photographic works (**Cameraworks** Thames & Hudson, £30), though their techniques and the worlds they depict are so different. Green conveys the claustrophobia of his own closely-knit suburban family in a *faux-naif* style; Hockney's joined-up snapshots give a cool, spacious view of his smart, jet-set world of poolsides and luxurious modern interiors in California and London. Yet the occasional irruption of Hockney's mother from Bradford into these glossy scenes, the relaxed intimacy with which Hockney treats his friends (as Green his family and especially his wife) and above all the tricks with time and perspective and the disruption of the traditional, window shaped, rectangular format of a picture emphasise what the two artists share more than what divides them. It is nothing very profound, but these affectionate anecdotes of the trivial and material, like Rothko's of the spirit, also contribute to defending the world with the image of Eden. □

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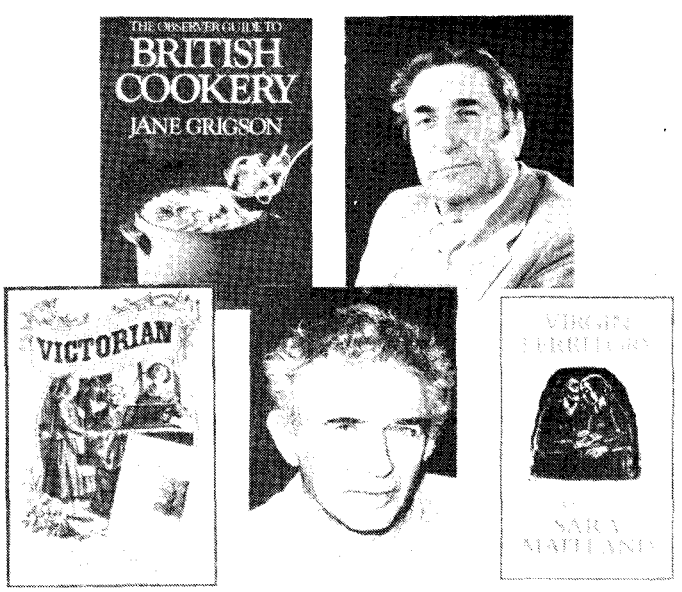

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As Arthur Rimbaud once said

Barney Hoskyns

FOR A FIGURE so respected and so seminal to intelligent popular music, Bob Dylan elicits an awful lot of waffle from his admirers. He is a magnet for verbiage.

Two Dylan tomes have just appeared which, in differing ways, uphold the waffle-load: Vermilion's handsome, large-format hardback **Dylan** (£20), fleshing out irresistible pictures with a meanderingly dotty text by *Rolling Stone*'s Jonathan Cott, and **A Darker Shade of Pale** by Wilfrid Mellers (Faber, £6.95), a discursive and long-winded exegesis.

Cott's really is a feeble effort, a comic simplification of the artistic experience and a desperate attempt to turn a confused and dishonest man into a seer and prophet of 'that' generation. When in doubt, or at a point where it might not be a bad idea to examine a lyric or two of Dylan's to see whether it is saying anything, Cott falls back on bizarre analogies with French poets and Chinese sages to make soggily specious points about the man's 'essential genius'. 'As Arthur Rimbaud said, I is another', or 'as the 16th century philosopher Li Chih had it, once men become phonies, everything becomes phoney . . .'

Whatever Columbia's John Hammond saw in the scrawny, affectedly cool beatnik from Minnesota, it wasn't a great poet or thinker. Wilfrid Mellers is another sucker for Dylan's tiresomely cryptic vanities, unable to take any simple pleasure in the real strength of the first seven albums, namely the very assurance of the pose, the raw and rolling flow of the music, and determined to draw the most dreary textbook themes out of 'the body of the work'.

This is not his whole story, to be fair. The first half of the book is an extended, and erudite, tour of the many ethnomusics which may have seeped into the emerging Dylan's consciousness: Gaelic work songs and 'monodies of deprivation', bluegrass and cajun, Arkansas String Bands and Georgian Organ Grinders. These are fascinating to learn about, if one can part the dread sea of 'evangelical folk heterophonies' and 'unsullied diatonic majors' that suffuses every page. Yet, at the end of all this, on page 121, we are suddenly informed that after all 'influences with Bob Dylan are never more than skin deep' — 'what matters is what he does, not what he absorbs'. Well thanks, Wilf, that was a pleasant waste of time.

The hundred or so pages remaining Mellers spends trudging diligently through tens upon hundreds of the bard's wise whinings, pointing out, for example, how like Rimbaud's 'discontinuous metaphors' are Dylan's own (*are* Rimbaud's metaphors discontinuous?). If he reaches conclusions at all, they tend to be as softheadedly indulgent as Cott's: 'Dylan, true artist that he is (sic), has used his own pain to investigate experience relevant to us all', he notes; 'he is the first white American poet-composer whose genius is both creative and interpretive'. Hard to disagree with statements that mean virtually nothing.

At heart the good Wilfrid is a classifier, and in his donnish eagerness to identify 'types' of songs he completely misses his target. Dylan's own description of *Blonde On Blonde* as 'that thin, wild mercury sound, metallic and bright gold' conveys more in a subjective flash to me than all Mellers's hundred pages of worthy plodding.

More oblique as a subject of study is Ray Davies of **The Kinks**, whose official biography has been written by Jon Savage (Faber, £10.95 & £5.95) — brave endeavour, given the glaring absence of real biographical meat in Davies's life. What, after all, makes Davies so eccentric is what (in pop terms) makes him so ordinary: his sweetly drab Englishness, a visioning of a world quite detached from loud young people. Ray Davies never wrote a 'My Generation' because it *wasn't* his generation.

Savage narrates a sad, grey story of isolation, an isolation, however, which makes The Kinks sociologically the most interesting group to burst out of the whole beat explosion. It's marvellously apt, for instance, that the very name Kinks may have been suggested by 'an Old Etonian ne'er-do-well', for The Kinks epitomise the criss-cross class currents of the 'kinky' Profumo era. It was Davies's genius, but also his undoing, to shake off working-class culture: he spent the rest of his songwriting life trying to regain it, enduring several breakdowns in the process.

Restricted though he is by the bounds of the 'official' biography, Savage thoroughly documents The Kinks' failure to move with rock's evolution, and their subsequent years in a wilderness of anachronistic Village Green Preservation Societies. He shows how the brutal beauty of 'Dead End Street' could give way to the blunt mockery of *Preservation*, where 'what was once implied by a line, a guitar phrase . . . is now explained to death', and he suggests, between the lines, how much of Davies's self-doubt was bound up with his confused sexual identity.

Two fine paperback studies from left-wing publishers Pluto: David Toop's **The Rap Attack** (£4.95) is an excellent genealogy of New York City's premier street sound, the oral-bragging-over-cut-up-drum-beats groove known as Rap/Hip Hop, while **Signed, Sealed, & Delivered** by Sue Steward and Sheryl Garratt (£5.95) intelligently examines the status and activity of women in modern pop.

'In no other city in the world has vernacular art impinged so fiercely', writes Toop of the Big Apple, and the real sense one gets in *The Rap Attack* is of a genuinely participatory culture where anything and everything can be created at street level, including language. He traces rap back through the soul preaching of Joe Tex and James Brown, the toasting of Jamaican DJs and the Forties jive patter of Cab Calloway, all the way to the chanted extemporising of Nigerian griots, and finds that the same makeshift elements remain constant — above all the use of the tongue as a weapon.

Toop brings to life a whole community of dancers and turntable masters, looking at the use rap culture makes of models like kung fu and blaxploitation flicks, African tribes and video games, and concluding that Hip Hop is above all an attitude. His technical exposition is riveting, and a glossary of terms is included wherein (by typical Bronx inversions) 'treacherous' comes to mean 'right on' and to 'chill' is to relax.

Signed, Sealed, & Delivered (subtitled 'True Life Stories Of Women In Pop') is sectioned into areas of investigation: Sue Steward considers styles of singing and girls' inhibitions in playing 'macho' instruments like the guitar while Sheryl Garratt goes behind the scenes to examine business and media. The result, drawing on a wide range of interviews, is a fine overview of how women see themselves in pop, how men see women as entertainers *per se*, and how the industry inherently still works against them. The final chapter is Garratt's fascinating memoir of being an original Rollermaniac, and an essay on the role of young girls as 'retentive consumers'. □

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JUDITH HART has been Minister and Shadow for overseas development and has published *Aid and Liberation*. She is now a backbench MP.

JESSICA MITFORD's publications include *Hons and Rebels*, *A Fine Old Conflict* and, most recently, *The Making of a Muckraker*. She lives in California.

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The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto 1941-1944

ed. LUCJAN DOBROSZYCKI *Yale* £25

Lodz has been one of Poland's main industrial centres since the 19th century, when the huge textile industries grew up. In the last war it became a centre for deportees from all across Europe, crammed into the Jewish ghetto by the Nazis. This *Chronicle* detailing the lives of those tragic victims of fascism was compiled by 15 Jewish scholars and academics most of whom themselves died during the war. It is massive — more than 550 pages — and yet it is a totally compelling narrative.

One of the major difficulties faced by a reviewer of this type of work is how to convey the immense tragedy it depicts without being either banal or histrionic. The initial impact is of outrage, that the Jews apparently did nothing to rebel on a united front against such a fate. But the community sustained itself by hope; hope that the work the Nazis provided meant that they were of use to their captors, and that this would be the means of their survival until the allies defeated Germany. This illusion was actively encouraged by the Nazis.

The record is made more profoundly melancholic by the restrained archivist style employed by the chroniclers. They meticulously note attempted and successful suicides; the death counts from typhus, tuberculosis and other diseases; the ration levels; the output of various small workshops; and the few moments of pleasure, such as the generous donation by one woman of several hundred apples to the ghetto hospital, which were then baked in sugar to provide a feast that squeezes a rare exclamation mark from the chronicler.

By the end the ghetto held more than 68,000 people. All but 1,400 of these were deported by train in appalling conditions to Auschwitz, where most of them were gassed.

What happened to Poland's Jews should not be forgotten, and Lucjan Dobroszycki's life-work has been to make sure of that. In this he has been given splendid assistance by Richard Lourie, the main translator here, and the regrettably unregarded excellent translator of many important recent volumes of Polish literature.

Gary Mead

Environmental Warfare

ed. ARTHUR H. WESTING *Taylor & Francis* £12

People have been messing with the environment to help win wars for centuries. Major flooding kept the French out of Holland in 1672, although the locals would have preferred the French to the floods. Getting on for a million Chinese were drowned in 1938 the same way, and even the British attacks on German dams which turned into *The Dam Busters* drowned almost 1,300 people.

This book from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute goes into the wide range of very destructive ways of turning natural forces into weapons, and thinks about ways of restricting this class of warfare. It is possible to imagine a variety of very exotic forms of environmental warfare — induced volcanoes and earthquakes, diverted asteroids, artificial tidal waves. A lot of this seems to be fantasy. But, even with already established science, it is possible to devastate large areas by herbicides or floods, and other weapons like directed hurricanes may not be too far behind.

Environmental Warfare sets out the technologies and what might be done about them with remarkable clarity. While none of them are as potent as nuclear weapons, all have potential to cause widespread and hard-to-detect destruction. So far only two international agreements have even been proposed to cover the possible problems of environmental warfare. One is the 1977 Environmental Modification Convention, which needs to be strengthened and taken more seriously. For example, it covers only destruction of areas of several hundred square kilometres or more — as Trinidad and Tobago pointed out, their entire country could be rendered uninhabitable with the Convention unbreached. The other, the 1977 protocol to the Geneva Convention, suffers from the problem that no major power apart from China has signed — certainly not the UK.

Martin Ince

Islam in the World

MALISE RUTHVEN *Penguin* £3.95

Over the past decade or so, we have been made to believe that Muslim societies are undergoing 'Islamic revival'. That this analysis is flawed is one of the many perceptive points made by Malise Ruthven in his book.

In a world riven by superpower rivalries and the exploitation of poor South by rich North, many ruling elites in Muslim as well as non-Muslim states of the Third World are increasingly eager to stay neutral between the two superpowers, and adopt the middle way between capitalism and socialism at home. Therein lies the attraction of Islam. 'Suitably interpreted, Islam', writes Ruthven, offers an economic system where private property is allowed provided it is put to 'positive social benefit'.

Such a statement, however, ignores the fact that private capital and its accumulation have their own inner logic, and that there is no evidence to show that an Islamic industrialist is less exploitative of his workers than a non-Islamic one. 'Suitably interpreted Islam' is thus nothing less than 'ideal Islam'. But then this book argues that Islamic history is replete with instances of conflict between the ideal and the practical: the dream of the utopia created by Prophet Muhammad in Medina in 622-32 and the reality of a contemporary Muslim state.

The author offers a critical appreciation of the history of Islam, laid out logically and chronologically. He sets the scene by taking the reader through the rituals of the *hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. After narrating the life and times of Prophet Muhammad, he examines the salient statements of the Quran. He is particularly enlightening on the sects within Islam and fairly objective in describing how the Islamic world has met the challenge from the West.

Ruthven has combined scholarship with lucidity, a rare achievement. His self-confessed agnosticism gives strength and objectivity to his admirable work.

Dilip Hiro

Unquiet Souls: The Indian Summer of the British Aristocracy

ANGELA LAMBERT *Macmillan* £14.95

Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905, claimed to have nicknamed the late-Victorian group to which he belonged, the Souls, because, writes Angela Lambert in this absorbing book, 'in order to become one of the coterie, it was necessary to possess a soul above the ordinary'. It was also necessary to be upper-crust, rich, self-centred and (in the case of most members) given to philandering.

As Angela Lambert shows, by contrast with the vulgar self-gratification of the Prince of Wales's set, the intellectual and artistic ambitions of the Souls were high — though the only one of them to produce any kind of work of art was Frances Horner, the friend and colleague of Burne-Jones. The rest of the Tennants, Wyndhams, Charterises, Lytteltons, Desboroughs, Asquiths, *et. al.* that people this book were more fascinated by country house weekends than the serious attempt to write or paint or even think deeply.

Angela Lambert likes the Souls more than I do ('gifted', 'Mercurial', 'ethereally slender', 'passionate', 'handsome', even 'Soulful' are some of the adjectives she deploys); but she does not flinch from describing how Curzon callously jettisoned Elinor Glyn when his political fortunes seemed to be reviving. She has woven her story from unpublished letters and diaries and from interviews with old Souls and their acquaintances, as well as from published sources. She is moving about the death of their offspring in World War I. And *Unquiet Souls* is beautifully illustrated.

Angela Lambert also reveals how much the Souls spent on themselves. In 1899 Ettie Grenfell spent roughly £74,500 on housekeeping, including the wages of staff and the cost of food and entertaining. Servants started at 9d or 1s a day, rising at the age of sixteen to 10s (or 50p). In Parliament Souls like Balfour ruthlessly protected such privilege. He viciously opposed the minimum wage for miners in 1912. Some Souls even initially envisaged World War I as a relief from tediously striking workers. Today the spirit of the Souls is by no means dead, and anyone whose socialist principles are wavering would do well to read this book.

James Bentley

Puns

WALTER REDFERN *Blackwell* £14.95

I plan to pan *Puns*. And that, I think, is four of the little funsters already, at least by the Redfern system. D'you see? There's that *rhyme*, pan/plan; the *echo* pan/*Puns*; the ambiguity of *tense*, viz. plan/present or plan/future; and, oh, there's another in there somewhere. It is not a text-book example. But Pundit — whoops! — Redfern has stuffed his little treatise with text-book tips on how to track a pun.

The roll-call of sources is endless. In the index there are dreadful warnings. It ends — it would — on *zeugma*; it opens with Ackerley, C.J. Another dimwit — seven references — is one Gershon Legman, whose prosing in such heated bunkum as *Rationale of the Dirty Joke* long ago twisted my spine with shivers.

Professor Redfern (of French pun-upmanship) is doubtless a happy chap. *Puns* is his pet epic, plainly. I just hope his students survive his model for doctoral theses, which appears to consist of botching together snippets of received wisdom. Somehow he manages to make it direr still by adopting a 'jocular' tone — 'freely engaging in wordplay', the blurb calls it. Quiplets about quippery: they put the mockers on what semblance of an argument *Puns* may be conceded to possess.

So, what's a pun, then? Let's *Discuss*. Well, can be comic, can be colloquial, can be serious, can be subversive; can stir, bore, enrich (as in marrowbone jelly); can economise, satirise, advertise. They may even — with their 'primordial ambiguity' — 'remind us both of our mastery and of our lack of control over language'. In a sentence, they may be sententious or sentient. They are the stuffing of life. They refresh those participles supposed to be otherwise unreachable.

But this Redfern puntechnicon, oh help me, trundles all over the place, the shop, the road. It is the first book sent to me for review which makes me actually angry, so crammed is it with the scrambled guff of Intensive Research.

Bill Greenwell

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FILMS

Should have known better

John Coleman

McCartney and friends in a jam

Give My Regards to Broad Street (PG)
Empire; Odeon, Marble Arch
Le Bal (PG)
Lumiere; Gate, Notting Hill
The Pope of Greenwich Village (15)
Plaza
Annie's Coming Out (PG)
Classics, Chelsea and Tottenham Court Road
Maria's Lovers (18)
Classic, Haymarket

PETER WEBB is probably better known as the man who directed Hovis, Ovaltine and John Courage commercials. After his feature film debut with **Give My Regards to Broad Street**, starring Paul McCartney, written by Paul McCartney, with music and lyrics by Paul McCartney, there can be little doubt that Mr Webb will continue to be better known as the man who directed Hovis, Ovaltine and John Courage commercials.

Somehow, making an acceptable Paul McCartney commercial has proved beyond Mr Webb's powers. It is always possible, of course, that Mr Webb — who shall henceforth be nameless — encountered certain problems with a script never worth the water it was written on. Paul (Mr McCartney), a pop superstar, stuck in a traffic jam in his chauffeured car, dreams that the master tape of his new album has been pinched by an ex-con employee and that he has till midnight on a busy working day to find it; otherwise, sinister financiers will take over his sonic empire. Dreams within this dream allow of the sort of pop video material, notably a Victorian interlude involving a picnic, a boat over a weir, a night ramble through Jack-the-Ripper streets, which has many of us cursing the invention of television.

But why, I hear you cry, make such a fuss about a length of celluloid evidently designed as a showcase for some 14 McCartney songs? I shall tell you. Leaving aside the hardened-artery reproach that most of them are inaudible or, more correctly, indecipherable, one still has to confront the fact that *Give My Regards to Broad Street* — only reinforced by the impudent promise of its title — encompasses production numbers that would disgrace a village hall, attempts at humour (a fluttery Beeb producer) of toe-curling banality and a heartrending misuse of the late Sir Ralph Richardson, imported gently to admonish Paul: 'If you didn't run around so much, you might get a better view of the world, y'know.' Alas for the old world-view: what we get — my prime gripe — is a kind of family farrago, an extended ego-trip, a chance to oo-er at Paul, expressionless save for the odd near-smirk, playing Paul, Linda playing Linda and Ringo playing Ringo. McCartney wakes at the close, to be ushered from his limo under an umbrella, but it had been raining in my heart for a long time before that.

A 'musical' of rather more substance is Ettore Scola's heralded **Le Bal**, adapted by him, Ruggero Maccari and Furio Scarpelli from a French stage show. The setting for this wordless exercise in forms of nostalgia is a large dance-hall, built in the Thirties and decorated in a mixture of styles. As much might be said of the movie, which is calculated (*le mot juste*) to mean a lot more to Gallic audiences than to us tight little islanders as it shifts from the present day back to the Front Populaire, World War II, the Occupation, American liberation, Coca-colonisation, through *les événements* of 1968, up to today again. Each section ends in a flash-photo freeze, with the colour bleeding out and the camera withdrawing to display the framed result hanging on a wall of the ballroom.

Nothing so becomes this entertainment as its opening. One at a time, women of all classes and ages descend the stairs, some to prink and bare gums as they cross towards us, their mirror, others caught comically in the real mirrors. Then the men arrive, if anything more grotesque -- lounge lizard; gangler with mincing walk; bluff fatty; silver-haired elegant. Memories of the staff dance in *Il Posto*, even of the often enchanting *Roseland*, are evoked: stockinged legs sprawl invitingly or wrap themselves nervously round chairs, trousered legs stalk and slither The cast switch roles as the years pass: that gangler becomes a German officer reduced to dancing with a mackintoshed male *collabo*; the predator of the beginning; and so on. 'And so on', in fact, tends to sum up an increasingly corny series of trapped instants of French history, interest turning on recognition, for instance, that the South American bloke is now an unwelcome Algerian. But director Scola and his photographer Ricardo Aronovich manage some mute humour engagingly enough; and there is always the referential matter of a gangsterish Gabin look-alike making his moll jealous by wooing a society lady while her drunk aristocratic companion keeps replacing smashed monocles, the bits of homage to René Clair and others, to keep film-buffs happy. How the director can disclaim nostalgia, though, baffles almost as much as the (handout-translated) words in which he does so delight: 'Nothing to do with the "Ah, for the balls of yesterday!" lark'. I wouldn't be *too* sure.

Stuart Rosenberg's **The Pope of Greenwich Village**, boiled down by Vincent Patrick from his own novel, proves to be a distillation of nothing much, turning on the relationship between a peculiarly unattractive and mumbling pair of bonded males, Charlie (Mickey Rourke) and his nutty young distant cousin Paulie (Eric Roberts), New York hustlers with different aims though similar speech-patterns: both say everything four or five times. As others have noticed, we have met this odd couple before, in Scorsese's *Mean Streets*, where Keitel and De Niro were preferable. Mad Paulie uses Charlie, as the latter's nice, blonde girlfriend points out to him, memorably adding, 'Why are you always one inch from becoming a good person?'. Sacked from a restaurant because of Paulie's fiddling, they undertake a robbery, interrupted by a cop who falls to his death down a lift-shaft. We quickly learn he was on the take: the graft goes higher up. It also emerges that the stolen money is from a Mafia-owned company. A lot of chasing around ensues; Paulie loses a thumb to the local Mafia boss, Bedbug (Burt Young), and persists in mucking things up for himself and loyal Charlie to the long-in-coming end. P.S. For the first ten minutes, I and my neighbour at the press show (we exchanged notes afterwards) caught scarcely a word and they weren't even singing.

Gil Brealey's **Annie's Coming Out** has a

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Having a *Bal* in Ettore Scola's nostalgic 'silent' musical set in a timeless dance-hall of 'instants of French history'

marvellous performance from Angela Punch McGregor, sweeping away the ignoble hesitancies that inspirational movies drawn from true life are wont to create. She is Jessica Hathaway, the teacher who stirs things up when she realises one at least of her new charges at Brentwood, an Australian institution for retarded children (*'profoundly* retarded', as the hidebound director reiterates), has a sound mind in a useless body. This Annie O'Farrell (movingly played by Tina Arhondis, who suffers the same handicaps as the authentic Annie) painstakingly learns to read and communicate; the stages of her learning make enthralling watching; by the time a crucial court case brings affairs to an up-beat outcome I was willing to forgive a few moments of manipulation and glow like any other human being.

The Soviet director Andrei Konchalovsky's American debut, **Maria's Lovers**, left me terminally seething, however, at its downright silliness. From a Platonov story here set in a Yugoslav community in small-town Pennsylvania, it veers from a sober extract from John Huston's documentary, *Let There Be Light*, into wildish melodrama, with Nastassja Kinski incited to ham horribly as tormented bride of an impotent GI back from the war. Only Keith Carradine as an itinerant guitar-playing stud and Robert Mitchum as the GI's rueful dad furnish some slight relief. □

THEATRE

Tiger, tiger

Benedict Nightingale

Phèdre
RACINE *Old Vic*
The Way of the World
CONGREVE *Haymarket*

ONE THING you can say for the London theatre this autumn: several performances are on offer that should be seen by anyone tempted to doubt the versatility and resourcefulness of our leading actresses. Judi Dench's *Mother Courage*, a combative punk wandered out of a dole-queue in Catford or Deptford, I've already celebrated for its cool inventiveness. But now she's been joined by Glenda Jackson's Phèdre and Maggie Smith's Millamant, representing force and subtlety respectively. In fact, let me throw caution to the winds and declare that each is so distinctive it will be impossible to think of either role in quite the same way again.

I've a recording of Bernhardt's **Phèdre**, and very astonishing she sounds amid the antique crackle: first throbbing and tremulously chanting out her passion, then rising to a weird spectral wail and ending with a frantic, helpless growl. It's only one speech, but it confirms what was always said, that she emphasised the desolation and thwarted tenderness of the love-lorn queen. So did Edwige Feuillère back in 1957. And so, in my necessarily limited experience, have most English actresses. You've felt their pain; but you haven't felt, as you sometimes do with Miss Jackson, that the management should keep a tamer with stick and net permanently stationed in the wings, in case pain made their Phèdres dangerous.

Jackson is in an older tradition, that of Rachel, whom the critic G.H. Lewes lauded for most untender virtues. She communicated 'Scorn, rage, lust, merciless malignity'; she suggested that Phèdre's love for her stepson 'was a diseased passion, fiery and irresistible, yet odious'. Glenda Jackson doesn't hit the same heights as Rachel, or even aim at them; but hers is an equally unsentimental creation. It's easier to imagine her swallowing Hippolytus with a snarl and a belch than making love to him. You can still more readily see her turning her teeth on herself and tearing her own flesh in a fever of resentful exasperation.

Just once we feel the pathos of her predicament. 'Make him love me,' she earnestly, touchingly implores the unhearing gods. But that regression into little-girl wishfulness is soon over and there again is the full-grown predator, dyspepticly pacing its cage. She speaks of those gods with weary sourness, as of old enemies who have made their inevitable move against her, and of herself with dislike and contempt. Whether she's laughing and sneering at her 'insatiable desires', or wrinkling her nose as if disdainfully smelling her own corruption, or holding her rebellious stomach and rocking to and fro, or revealing herself to Hippolytus with a great wolfish howl, her Phèdre is a woman unable to forgive herself for feelings she's powerless to curb.

Hostility, not love, is the performance's driving force. Somewhere behind that grey, feral face, Jackson keeps a private enemies-list, on which are inscribed herself, the goddess Venus and, finally and most prominently, the princess Aricie. It's almost with gratitude that she learns of Hippolytus's love for the girl, because it means that the baleful emotions that have been directed inwards can turn outwards. She wails, she screeches, she doubles up, so menacingly vindictive that her confidante Oenone is nervously shrinking away long before she herself becomes the object of her

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mistress's ire. And that's quite an achievement, because Joyce Redman plays the part pretty unsentimentally too. Imagine, if you can, a slug with hoarse voice and fangs, and you've some idea of Phèdre's dear old nanny.

The grandeur of Philip Prowse's production is superficial only. It occurs in a stately palace room, all plinths and urns and massive drapes. It marks the offstage death of Tim Woodward's true-blue Hippolytus with some sensational effects: a mighty rumble, which shakes the theatre, followed by the splintering of a wall, which collapses to reveal the corpses of the horses that have dragged him to his doom. But Robert David MacDonald's translation is life-sized, and some of those delivering it are almost perversely unheroic. Should Gerard Murphy make the great Theseus so much like a drooling skinhead back from a battle on the football terraces? Right though Georgina Hale may be to rescue Aricie from virtuous dullness, should she be quite so sly, cynical and self-seeking?

But then should Glenda Jackson be offering us so little of the tragic heroine, so much of the scowling hag? Many will doubtless think it damning that when she exits to her death, nose still wrinkling, we're not just unmoved, but actually relieved. She isn't the complete Phèdre, that's for sure. Yet she's incomplete in a bold and interesting way, one as true to the character as the *via dolorosa* followed by more sympathy-seeking actresses. What she shows is that there's nothing noble about being skewered in the guts by Cupid: it's an ugly, bitter, humiliating business.

And so, if more lightly, does Maggie Smith in **The Way of the World**. The production in which she's wryly at work is by William Gaskill, an expert at ridding Restoration comedies of their accumulated gilt and reclaiming them for reality. Accordingly, Joan Plowright's Wishfort gently suggests that glad-eyed old ladies aren't just figures of fun, John Moffatt's Witwoud that the fops of yesteryear were no more ludicrous than those on the literary fringes today and Smith's Millamant that proposals of marriage should be treated as cautiously as proposals to come live happily ever after in the Bastille.

Not that she neglects the fun. Not that she doesn't give us skilfully-turned skittishness. Not that she isn't partly the spoiled coquette, languidly toying with her wooers. Who but Smith could inject such hilarious incredulity into a two-word reply to an invitation to take the air? 'A *walk*,' she repeats, implying that it's a ritual marginally more primitive than cannibalism and best left to tribesmen in rain-forests.

Yet always her Millamant is detached, always watchful and wary. Her eye for absurdity extends to her own affectations, which she subtly mocks, yet also uses as a defence against what she sees still more clearly, the danger of choosing a bad husband and literally 'dwindling into a wife'. Gradually we realise that her wit camouflages fear, indecision, vulnerability and, finally, a feeling for Mirabell that won't be suppressed. When she comes to the line 'I find I love him violently', she sits down with a bump, white-faced at a confession she means, is glad she means, and is absolutely appalled she means. How many other actresses could simultaneously imply so much? □

ART

Reasons to show

Peter Dormer

THE MOST obvious path for the young and career-minded painter or sculptor to take is the State route: art school, naturally, followed by grants from the appropriate regional arts association, appearances in subsidised provincial shows, a solo exhibition and a London show in one of the quality subsidised galleries — Whitechapel, Riverside, Institute of Contemporary Arts. Sometimes, somewhere along this route, a commercial dealer will step forward, promote an individual or a small group of artists and then sell their work (at much inflated prices) to one of the few big subsidised collections. Such collections include that of the Tate Gallery, which buys bad art too soon or good art too late; the Arts Council's Collection, which is good; and the British Council's.

Attitudes to this set-up (which has, as its apotheosis, the Turner Prize) vary from 'it-doesn't-serve-British-art-too-badly' to one or all of the following criticisms — 'it's élitist/racially discriminatory/sexually-discriminatory/middle class/anodyne'. Young careerists on the way up do not bother too much about the criticisms where they are not affected by them. Those that are affected join forces with young Comrades who are beating out a parallel path of opportunity, one which is open only to socially committed art. Work carried out under the social commitment umbrella need not result in artefacts or exhibitions, but the application of art skills to community use (sometimes very productively). A lot of artefacts do still emerge — murals, posters, booklets, didactic art exhibitions. Gradually one or two galleries committed to committed art, as the phrase has it, are emerging, soon to be joined, if the GLC has its way, by the Hayward Gallery. Meanwhile, London's Pentonville Gallery in Lambs Conduit Street, WC1, has been doing an interesting job.

When the Pentonville Gallery moved to Lambs Conduit Street last year (formerly it had been housed in a converted East-End funeral parlour) it declared it would provide 'a forum for a bit of backbone' for Her Majesty's Opposition. The Gallery directors are honest in their commitment and they do not tell lies even when they exaggerate their role to the level of Soviet picture-postcard romanticism as in statements such as 'If the Pentonville Gallery should founder as a result of Thatcherite dictatorship, it will not be for lack of commitment on the part of its workers'. Their honesty resides in their frankness about some of the art they have shown in the past. In a press release earlier this year the Pentonville said:

> We must come clean and say that some of the work that's been hung on these walls has been difficult to live with, and on occasion difficult to enthuse about, difficult to defend when attacked by the great British public.

This is refreshing. I've never read an art critic or heard an art institution director say, as they ought to have done on a dozen occasions, 'Sorry, we were wrong, that really was nonsense.' They always suggest that the work they promote is great art and, although they know we think they're pulling a fast one, and although *they* know they're pulling a fast one, admit nothing. Not surprisingly, they are regarded as élitist. And at least the Pentonville always has another reason for putting on work, even when it's bad (the reason is, of course, political or social comment).

The 'group' of artists the Pentonville exhibits is ever-expanding and from the mix of artists we can see it is striving for racial and sexual equity. The work varies from quasi-documentary and socialist realism and expressionism through to photography. Some of the work is direct, like agit-prop, some of it is recondite. By the criteria of craft, observation, thoughtfulness and success in communication, a number of their artists are good. There are others who are present presumably for 'heart-in-the-right-place' or 'needs-encouragement' reasons.

The Pentonville is, however, wrong in its belief that bad art is justified when it has good intentions. 'Committed art' is sometimes disparaged simply because its not infrequent awfulness subverts whatever argument it is trying to promote. Bad art does not, cannot, provide material for backbones, not even for Her Majesty's Opposition.

In any case, politics are better served by direct means or direct media: TV reportage is an example. Not only do a few minutes on a news programme about famine make an impact but skilled television follows it up, as ITN has done, with film explaining that the economic and moral responsibility for the famine rests with the West. The explanation I saw was coherent and clear, done with much art and dazzling reportage of the kind that some art critics have suggested are unnecessary in political art. I relish one review, republished apparently with approbation by the artist, of whom it was said:

> The artist does not allow us to forget, to be sidetracked by aesthetics or dazzling reportage. Instead he nags and unsettles the conscience by presenting the inescapable flaws in our society as the first and only real priority, undiluted by artistic diversions.

Art without art is still Art? How is that, I wonder?

The Pentonville Gallery will continue, I hope, although its desire to be a forum would be more speedily increased if *the* Government, *the* Council or *the* Something moved to close it down because of what it was trying to say. Then it would be a national *cause célèbre*. Nonetheless, some people, albeit locally, want to close it down — i.e. the National Front — and so, as long as The Pentonville is a thorn in their flesh, it has every right to claim that it has impact. □

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Andrzej Krauze

The travail of travel

Jessica Mitford

A COUPLE of definitions from the renowned *Oxford English Dictionary* — the 13-volume set, that is:

> Travel *sb.* [orig. the same word as TRAVAIL]
> 1. Labour, toil; suffering, trouble; labour of child-birth etc.
> 2. The action of travelling or journeying.
>
> Travel *v.*
> 1. To torment, distress; to suffer affliction; to suffer the pains of parturition; etc.
> 2. *intr.* To make a journey; to go from one place to another.

I have long been intrigued by the clear bias of those distinguished OED lexicographers, who give top billing to 'labour, toil, suffering, torment, distress' and accord only a secondary meaning to 'the action of travelling. . .to make a journey'. What dreadful torments had they, personally, endured?

One could, of course, expatiate endlessly on the suffering, trouble, torment and distress attendant on setting foot outside one's front door to embark on foreign travel. The suffering caused by losing one's luggage between Rome and Luxor. The torment of a forced unscheduled landing in Kansas City and a six-hour wait in that dry airport. Most travellers could doubtless match these experiences; and most will probably agree that these horrors soon fade from memory. Again, the parallel between childbirth and travel: in the first case, one quickly forgets the 'pains of parturition' in the pleasure of welcoming a dear little babe; in the second the 'distress' and 'affliction' of getting there recedes with the delight of arrival at one's destination.

To focus upon one major cause of suffering endured by American travellers to Europe: the irksome language problem. I should quickly explain that there should be few if any difficulties on the continent. The traveller will find that he is not expected to have mastered the outlandish languages spoken in Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia etc., since everybody he must deal with from the hotel concierge to the American Express office speaks perfectly fluent and intelligible English. (I am, of course, assuming that our traveller has the good sense to stick to well-worn touristic beaten tracks.)

His troubles will begin when he crosses the channel to England, full of linguistic land mines for the unsuspecting Yank who devoutly believes that he has finally arrived in a place where the inhabitants speak his native tongue. Some examples:

My American husband, Bob Treuhaft, and I had just arrived from California in a London hotel. We settled in to a morning of telephoning various English friends and relations. Only those who have tried to make telephone calls from a London hotel will appreciate the aggravation of the effort.

It goes like this: You pick up the receiver, and there is a five-minute wait until the hotel operator comes on the line. (Well — perhaps it's only one minute, but it seems like five.) You tell her or him the number you want. Much static; finally you may or may not reach your party, as operators call the person you want to talk to.

I had been working away at this frustrating task for a few hours, with only occasional success. 'Your turn,' I said to Bob. 'See if you can catch Martin Bernal, who lives somewhere near Cambridge. We haven't got the number, but he must be listed.'

Bob takes the telephone and asks the hotel operator for Information. Operator pretends to be totally mystified. 'Bob — you should say Directory Inquiries,' I prompt. He does so, already somewhat rattled by his first mis-step. Directory Inquiries comes on the line. Bob asks for Martin Bernal's number. Suddenly his face is a study in anguish, the sort of super-embarrassment of not understanding one word of what is being said. 'Here — *please* try . . .' He hands me the telephone. 'I'm afraid my husband couldn't understand what you were saying,' I explain.

'Well, madam,' says Directory Inquiries, by now quite cross: 'I told 'im in pline English that the number 'e wants is Steeple Bumstead 267.'

'Bob,' I said, 'He told you in plain English that the number you want is Steeple Bumstead 267.'

'I thought that's what he said,' answered Bob miserably. 'But I thought he must be pulling my leg.'

This summer, my 17-year-old grandson, college-bound in autumn, came to stay with us for his first visit to England. His charter flight from his home in Atlanta came in at Gatwick, so I told him to take the train to Victoria Station, then a taxi to the London flat where we were staying.

The lad arrived in some disarray, dashed out of the cab and into the loo.

'Sorry,' he said breathlessly when he emerged. 'But there are *no* toilets in Victoria Station — I was desperate.'

I was amazed: None, in that huge station? 'None. I looked everywhere for signs saying TOILET, REST ROOMS, LADIES & GENTS, HIS & HERS . . .' It turns out that there are lots of signs in Victoria Station saying 'WC', but the poor fellow hadn't a clue as to what that meant.

Another teen-aged sufferer: Friends of ours, a Californian doctor and his wife, were touring England with their 15-year-old son. Both are, by the way, very well-versed in English literature ancient and modern; in fact they were a bit scornful of my poor grandchild for not knowing the meaning of WC.

Wishing to save money on room rent, they sent advance notice to one of the English inns where they had reservations to ask for a cot in their room for their son. To the mortification of this hefty young soccer star, the innkeeper had provided a baby's cradle — in England, the only meaning of the word 'cot'.

Sometimes the linguistic shoe is on the other foot. An English friend told me of a mis-adventure that befell him and his twin brother when, at the age of 17, they were sent by train on a tour of Europe. (The twins were born in 1904, so this voyage must have been *circa* 1921, long before the age of modern tourism and the mastery of English by assorted European guides and predators.)

Their first destination was Florence. At dawn, they were awakened by the *wagon-lit* porter who was shouting 'Firenze! Firenze!' and gesturing to them to get off the train. When the twins refused to move, other railway officials joined the porter and took up his frantic cry: 'Firenze! Firenze!' to no avail. The train pulled out of the station with the boys still firmly clinging to their seats.

'Of course we'd been warned about foreigners,' my friend explained, 'and we thought they might have some sort of shady deal with a local hotel owner in this town. Or could they be kidnappers? So we were determined to stand our ground and not to budge until the train arrived in Florence.' □

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Naseem Khan

Wallflowers

IF YOU are black and are attracted by classical ballet, chances are you'll find yourself being gently steered towards contemporary or jazz, away from ballet. After all, it makes sense: there's no future to speak of in this country for black classical dancers. A mere handful has made it in regional companies, but the big London companies — the Royal Ballet, Festival Ballet, Sadlers Wells — are absolutely white.

Why? The question is not as disingenuous as it sounds. Many young black people are adamant that it is only prejudice that is at the root of it; not surprisingly, the big companies do not accept this and give other reasons. What is not disputed, however, is that there has been little movement over the years. As first-class black contemporary dancers continue to come through the system, the dearth of professional black ballet dancers continues unabated. Is it fair to say, I asked Ann Stannard and Christopher Gable, directors of the Central School of Ballet, that virtually none of their black students would be able to get a job in this country? Yes, they said, that was so. Bridget Espinosa of the London Studio Centre qualified it. 'They all get work,' she said, 'but they usually have to settle for *Starlight Express* and *Cats*.'

The issue of futureless dancers has been edging its way to the fore again recently, both in the columns of *Dance and Dancers* and with the news that Arthur Mitchell's Harlem Dance Company has been asked by the GLC to do a regular residency. It's also been given an extra little shove by the Arts Council's dance department which has recently completed a special pilot scheme. For five Saturdays, the Festival Ballet's large studio — all air and space and fine period carvings — was taken over by a group of black schoolchildren. Involved with some form of dance, but with no contact with ballet, they'd offered themselves up as guinea-pigs in a condensed ballet course.

They were introduced in doses of one-and-a-half hours at a time to the rarified world of a dance that differed vastly, in its movements and attitudes, from anything they'd done before. It wasn't easy. Don Maclennan put the emphasis on 'doing' rather than 'doing perfectly', but it made hard demands on the group. At the end, they sat on the floor looking pretty knocked out. Would any of them like to go on with it? No, no (except for two enthusiasts), they panted.

What was the aim of this exercise? It wasn't to locate hidden talent and the Markovas of the future. It wasn't to provide a decent grounding in a new but useful style. It might have made some of the 16 participants think that maybe ballet was not so soppy as it was made out and, in its small way, have done a bit of PR for the dance. But the Arts Council's true object was to stimulate not the dancers but the audience. Each week, a new batch of interested observers turned up — some people from companies, many from the post-16 vocational dance schools, some from educational institutions and dance bodies. Most of them, it is probably fair to say, were on the Arts Council's side, felt that classical ballet should offer a future to black dancers and would like to see something done. But what, and why the barriers?

A number of different reasons emerged from the schools and the dance world at large. The Royal Ballet's official response was that hardly any black students auditioned for their school. Unofficial reasons in wide circulation are that directors feel — as Balanchine said to Arthur Mitchell — that black dancers in a *corps de ballet* would destroy the visual symmetry; that black bodies are the wrong shape ('big bums and bad feet') and, above all, that they are not good enough.

It is the last reason that people in the field find the hardest to counter, since it leads to a chain of indisputable facts: that ballet is still a class-based white activity; that very few black children are sent by their parents to private ballet classes at the age when they need to should they want later to make a career of ballet (boys should have started by the age of 11, it was said, while girls need to have started before that); and, of course, that parents are naturally even less keen to send children to dance classes when they can see all too clearly that there are no black people employed in that field.

But, say the schools, until more black dancers come up all the way through the system, it will be even more unlikely that big companies will take on black dancers. Time, they all say, and more pupils are the only way. 'Our ambition,' said Ann Stannard, 'is to keep on presenting black dancers to them, so that it becomes patently obvious that the reasons that they give are not valid. We want to make it very very difficult for them to refuse.'

In many ways it is a slightly depressing scenario. In eight or ten years, say the experts, things will be better; the black children coming through the small private schools are now a higher percentage than they were — a knock-on effect from the general dance explosion. When they reach dance maturity, the companies will not be able to ignore their beating on the door. Critics of this gradualist view do exist, saying that the length of time to train a classical dancer is by no means as long as purists maintain. To be fair, there are not many who will say this, but one of the premier is Arthur Mitchell who built his internationally respected black company on dancers who had not had anything like a full classical training.

One way or the other, positive action of some sort needs to be taken. More help for the junior end of the process and for dance schools intending to set up their own junior sections; an effort, by particularly sympathetic companies like Festival Ballet, to recruit, for a start if necessary, foreign black soloists ('role models', as jargon has it); an active monitoring process that will aim to see equality come sooner somehow rather than later — since all too often 'later', in the language of race, means a very long time. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Lost boys

I HAPPENED to be in Tehran when the Ayatollah was kicked out of Iran by the Shah in 1963. I was marooned in a hotel in the bus station with a grandstand view of the downtown riots: flaming buses, flying rocks, fleeing citizens and sinister processions of barefooted fanatics wearing special black shirts with press-stud panels at the back which let down to permit them to flog themselves with little lead-tipped cat-o'-nine-tails. The jingle and clank of these whips made a rhythmical accompaniment to their moaning chants as they passed under my window at night, a sound which was echoed by the army when they finally marched in: 'Huh — huh-huh.'

I was 21. I hadn't a clue what was going on, but some of the people who crowded into my room to watch told me that the shrines were orchestrating the riots to defend their vast land holdings which the Shah was naively trying to defeudalise. On the evidence of the two excellent programmes called *Warriors of Paradise* on **Everyman** (BBC-1), the activities of these unscrupulous types have not changed over the years, except that they are now trying to expand their estates into Iraq and beyond. For it is the Shi-ite intention to export their vision of Islam 'like electricity' to the rest of the world. Every day, busloads of the faithful drive off to Paradise, handing back before they go the little religious flags they've been given, since apparently there is a shortage of these.

Why so keen? Because the Mullahs have sold them a sly variation of Catch 22: if you die fighting in their 'holy war' you don't have to wait to get into Paradise like everyone else, you get in right away, *ahead* of the wretches who have died in their beds and *miles* ahead of those unfortunate fools who are still alive. This divinely-sanctioned bit of queue-jumping appeals to those who have been downtrodden all their lives: you may lose a few years of your life, goes the story, but you gain instant entrance to Paradise! Not only that, but you will actually be able to witness this world after death. (Though not perhaps see it too clearly.)

The shrines encourage families to supply them with cannon fodder by permitting the surviving members to go to the top of all waiting lists here on earth and allowing them to shop in special 'Martyrs' Supermarkets', so that families are seen to gain materially and socially from the deaths of their sons. Yes, dying meaninglessly as a teenager has been developed as a whole successful way of life. 'Long live Ayatollah Khomeini, He of the Soul Kind and Pure!'

The second of the two programmes dwelt on a family which has supplied four boys to the Ayatollah's dream of death. Their walls are crowded with 'official certificates of martyrdom' which are 'tangible proof that their sons are in paradise'. On their table stand Coke bottles full of 'a fluid reminiscent of their

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previous contents made in factories left over from the days of the Shah'. The Ayatollah endorses a different fluid: we were given lingering close-ups of the sickening Fountain of Blood (red water) which he has erected in Tehran to persuade the poor of the old lie.

For those who are not persuaded — the few remaining educated folk — there is always the Vice Squad, which tries 'to bring people to the paths of political righteousness' by stopping their cars and searching them in the street 'for moral as well as political offences'. For instance, if you're with a woman and she isn't your wife, mother or sister you're in trouble. As a final insult they are empowered to enforce the dress code that reduces the Iranian women folk to rudimentary glove-puppets.

There was a moment late last Wednesday night when the TV stopped looking like a tropical fish tank for a moment as a breeze called *Clips* on **Visions** (C4) blew through it, causing it to leak. This was a riveting piece of work by Chris Petit, who used a few well-chosen clips from current releases, punctuated with shots of David Byrne singing 'Psychokiller' to compose a lyrical and ironical essay on embattled male sexuality: High heels, a rolling empty tin, white shoes, 'Just let me put my hand there', 'Dad, what's a hardon?' Difficult to give an idea of how this open-ended construct simultaneously riveted and rejected the conventional TV-gape by chucking its contents on your living room floor like a pile of hot entrails, but in eight quick minutes Petit proved that this norm-hugging, norm-homing medium isn't necessarily its own message. □

Weekend competition

No 2850 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

Gather round, my little ones: we've been sent a new game to play. The Oxford University Press has just brought out a jolly little book entitled *The Oxford Guide to Word Games* (£6.95), a copy of which it has thoughtfully dispatched in our direction and from which I think that we might have fun with the following. *Bouts-rimés* are a list of rhymed words that someone (me) gives to others (you) to use, in the order in which they are given, as the line endings of a poem. Do you need an example? I expect you do (your wits have been less than electric of late). Imagine, then, that 'they' and 'obey' are the *bouts-rimés* you've been given: you might compose something like this: 'Humble compers know whom *they*/Must learn to honour and *obey*.' The subject matter, of course, is for you to decide — as are line lengths and rhythm. Right, your real *bouts-rimés* are these: lies; flies; sound; round; date; create; do; taboo; it; bit. A copy of the *Guide to Word Games* has generously been offered as an extra prize to each winner. Entries by 12 December.

No 2847 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Applications for parliamentary candidature.

Report **By Ernest Oswald fflap**

Oh dear, what can the matter be? Some flickerings of your customary brilliance appear in the entries hereunder (eight sovereigns each to their authors) but most of you (I *do* hate to say this) were really rather on the dim side.

I am a young, dynamic, white, heterosexual, middle-class, middle-brow, high-tech, Low Church, user-friendly, upwardly mobile advertising executive. A monetarist Dry rather than inflationary Wet, and strong on Victorian values, I am on most issues to the Right of the Monday Club — indeed I've sometimes thought of starting a Tuesday Club — but in my public speeches I would always strictly adhere to the official Party line, whatever that might happen to be at the time. I am dead against all strikes and picketing, and believe that all demands for wage increases should be refused, on the grounds that money does not bring happiness and the love of money is the root of all evil. My wife (an exceptionally attractive woman) is in entire agreement, and our two children simply can't wait to join the Young Conservatives.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

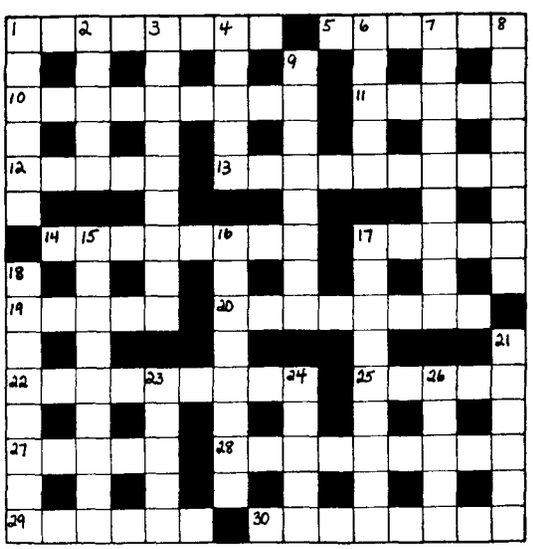
Dear Leeder

If you was to pick me for a MP for this manner — I meen the Ilands and Ilands of corst — I wood deffinitly see to it that we wun it. It only needs a cuple of my mates at eech poling statiun with the rite geer on and waring our badje and the punters wood soon get the messige. After I got in I wood deffinittly doo away with the kilts up here — thay are too ponssy for my likking and definittly not English. I wood get english lesons started in evry scool because just now you cant understand a bleedin word whot is sed. I no I am nue at the game but up in Westminister I wood definitely now how to vote. I wood wotch that bloke skinner and whotever he done I wood do the opposit and that way I wood bound to be rite. Yours hoapfuly.

KEN RUDGE

Weekend Crossword 1462

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1462, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 11 December.



Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

ACROSS

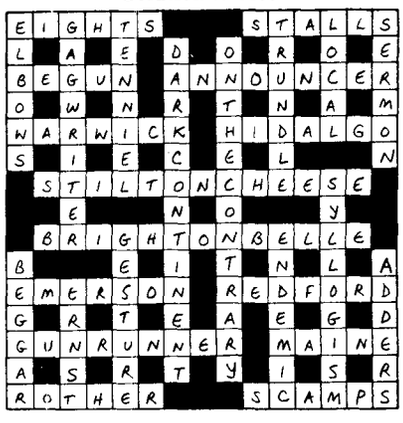
1. Faithful wife makes a writer go off with her (8)
5. Politician includes the last one in the name of hills (6)
10. A painting is done and places look different (9)
11. Become smaller like Tadpole's friend (5)
12. Follow us back in one direction (5)
13. Without smell or loss due to change (9)
14. Run down although potentially ill and almost better (8)
17. Assume one is in a job (5)
19. She takes part in horseplay with the doctor (5)
20. Periods of leisure which a man spends among unwanted things in the garden (8)
22. Assembly in which there is nothing in swearing at the opposition (9)
25. Standard bird (5)
27. South Americans enter to win cash prizes (5)
28. Mating with her turns into an unpleasant experience in bed (9)
29. Have a look, having backed a coloured horse (6)
30. Film people who have their last rest disturbed (8)

DOWN

1. Bed hired out by a friend (6)
2. What group of 24 would be if the little men were included (5)
3. Reducing the quantity of print in a novelist (9)
4. With no backing the philosopher would form a body of soldiers (5)
6. Queen holds goddess to be a consumer (5)
7. Gloomy when journalists go into action (9)
8. A nuisance since it is in trim (8)
9. Oil which makes one wildly keen about love (8)
15. Message of peace given in unknown quantity in country with a religious image (9)
16. We go in to phone the high up (8)
17. One of those television people who are to take part in the newspapers (9)
18. Punishment performed with a ruler by a graduate in science (8)
21. French poetry is moving with a bar (6)
23. The east is like this when a man gets up (5)
24. See 2.
26. Prayer for a cricketer (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1460



Prizewinners to 1460

M. P. Gaffey (Euxton, nr Chorley, Lancs).
Mrs N. McGregor (Glasgow)
O. M. Parkinson (Newton Abbot, Devon)

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Application forms are available from **John Penney, Head of Personnel Services, Town Hall, Mare Street, E8 1EA** or telephone **01-986 5331** (24 hour answering service) quoting reference.

Closing date: **14 December 1984.**

The Council intends to decentralise its services, therefore the duties, hours of work or location of this post may be subject to change.

We positively welcome applications from black people, disabled people and women where they are under-represented in particular jobs.

TYNE AND WEAR COUNTY COUNCIL

Chief Emergency Planning Officer

PO (1-4) £10,242—£11,052

The County Council invites applicants for this post within the County Clerk's department.

The County Council has declared the administrative county of Tyne and Wear a nuclear free zone and has sought the support of the local authority associations in calling for more stringent statutory control over radio-active substances, and in particular the manufacture, siting and movement of such materials in and through the county area. The successful candidate will be expected to: (a) advise the county on staffing levels necessary to monitor any such revised statutory controls: and (b) up-date the existing county major civil disaster plan, beach pollution plan and, in accordance with statutory obligations, the county national emergency plan. The person appointed will be expected to work in close liaison with the various departments of the county council, the metropolitan district councils, statutory and public bodies and other relevant agencies.

Applicants must have experience of managing a diverse range of activities such as those covered in emergency planning. The primary activity of liaison and co-ordination with many organisations demands a high level of personal skills.

Application forms and further details are available from: **the County Personnel Officer, Tyne and Wear County Council, Sandyford House, Archbold Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1ED. (Tel: Newcastle 816144 Ext. 206).**

Closing date: **14 December 1984**

The County Council is an equal opportunities employer.

FINANCIAL

IMMEDIATE ADVANCES £100-£25,000. Written terms on request. Regional Trust Ltd, 31 Dover St, London W1A 4RT. 01-491 2934.

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'MAGIC FLUTES', the new opera society, arranges outings, discussions and soirées. Now expanding in Bristol, Leeds & Manchester. Membership details from Cambridge headquarters te 0223.

SCRAMBLING IN SCOTLAND. I'm planning to form a small group to tackle some of the more exacting ridge walks and scrambles in Scotland starting in May, eg Cuillin Ridge, Aonach Eagach. Interested? Contact Deborah Saint, Box.

DALLAS based American (m) wants to start correspondence with English Coxes needed intellectual (m or f). Interests – Coronation Street, Brecht, Yorkshire, cream teas & Mozart. Box.

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LISTINGS

FRI 30 NOV

CHISWICK 'Keep GLC Gig' with Hank Wangford, Johnny G, Little Red Blues Band. Miners & CND stalls. Tickets: £2.50/£1.50 from **Hounslow Defend London Democracy Campaign 01-560 7843/891 1164.**

LONDON Miners' Benefit with Frank Chickens, Benjamin Zephaniah Leftwing Teds, NUM spkr, bar. 7.30pm Porchester Hall, W2. Tickets: £3/£1.50 UB40. **Org. Westminster N. Labour Party 01-286 9692.**

LONDON Contemporary Folk Concert – Benefit for Greater London CND 7.30pm-11pm Crypt St. Martins-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Sq, WC2. Adm. £2/£1.50 UB40. **Org. CND. 6 Endsleigh St, WC1. 01-388 1628.**

WANDSWORTH Labour Party's Xmas Dance, 8pm Civil Suite, Town Hall, SW18. High Jinx, Soul Survivors. **Tickets £3/£2 UB40 from John Tuohy 01-720 0225 day of by post Battersea CLP (Dance) 177 Lavender Hill, SW11.**

SAT 1 DEC

BIRMINGHAM 'Working for a Change' debate on employment in West Midlands. Spkrs. incl. Sam Aaronovitch, Angela Coyle. Stalls, food, creche. 10am-4.30pm Centre 13, School Rd, Moseley. Adm. £2/£1 UB40. **Sponsored by Marxism Today.**

LEAMINGTON SPA Arts & Crafts Sale for the Miners and Auction of prints, drawings, photographs by nationally known artists. 10am-5pm Oddfellows Hall, Warwick St. **Details: 0926 632501.**

LONDON Theatre Workshop led by Effie Arestides 10am-4pm Harmood Community Centre, 1 Forge Pl, Ferdinand St, NW1. Fe: £3/£2 UB40. **Details: 01-485 9850.**

BOLTON Struggles of the Lancashire Miners day conf. at Socialist Club, 16 Wood St. **Details: NWLHG 6 Alfred St, Farnworth, BL4 73T.**

LONDON 'Defend Union Political Funds' Campaign Conf. Spkrs. Ron Todd, Ken Livingstone, Jean McCrindle, Mick McGahey, Tom Sawyer, Robin Cook MP. 10am Central Hall, SW1. **Details: Labour Co-ordinating Cttee, 9 Poland St, W1. 01-439 3749/4371984.**

HACKNEY Christmas Benefit for Miners' Families 8pm 96 Dalston La, E8. Irish folk & Trad. Music. The Red Rock 'n' Roll Show. Adm £2/£1 UB40 incls. Food/Late Bar. Please bring food, toys, babies' clothes.

LONDON 'The Face of Poverty' Forum 11am-4pm Bloomsbury Community Hall, St. George's Churchyard, Bloomsbury Way, WC1. Frances Dale and miners' wives. **Org. Labour Heritage, Women's Research Cttee.**

LONDON 'Working Women & Families' Conf. 11am Main Hall, County Hall, SE1. Spkrs. Prof. Hilary Land, Ruth Lister. **Org. National Working Women's Organisations.**

HAMPSTEAD Book Fair in aid of Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign 12-5pm Moreland Hall, Heath St.

LONDON CND Christmas Fair 2pm Station Hs, Stapleton Hall Rd, N8. Adm. 15p. **Org. Hornsey CND.**

DENBIGH N. Wales Congress in support of Mining Communities Rally. 1pm Theatre Twm o'r Nant. Spkrs incl. D.E. Thomas MP, Kim Howells, St. Wales NUM, Angharad Tomos. **Details: Tony Heath, 72 High St, Blaenau Ffestiniog, N. Wales. 0766 830018.**

SUN 2 DEC

CROYDON 'Women in Action' TUC Womens Conf. 10am-2pm Ruskin Hs, Coombe Rd, **Details: Alison, Anne, Hilary 01-686 0796.**

LONDON Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign sponsored walk/demo 11am Grosvenor Sq. March to 10 Downing St. **Details: 01-226 6747.**

LONDON 'Is there room for Peace Now outside the political parties?' MAPAM meeting with Prof. Jonathan Frankel of the Hebrew Uni. 8pm 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6.

MON 3 DEC

ILFORD 'Nicaragua' talk on American threat and its implications for use of nuclear weapons. 8pm Friends' Meeting House, corner Albert Rd/Cleveland Rd **Org. Ilford CND.**

TUES 4 DEC

ISLINGTON '1984'/Spkr. Robin Cook MP Fabian Society Meeting 8pm Rm. 4, Town Hall, Upper St, N1.

WANDSWORTH Alcohol Problems Spkrs. Gerald Conyngham, Alcohol Concern, Andy Fox, Davies Centre, Pat Tugwell, Al-Anon. 7.30pm Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Gill Cl, SW18. Adm. free, Collection, tea/coffee. **Org. Assoc. for Mental Health, 3 Brodrick Rd, SW17.**

LONDON 'Licensing Law & Health' day conf. Kings Fund Centre, NW1. **Details: Action on Alcohol Abuse, 26 Craven St, WC2. 01-839 7344.**

WED 5 DEC

LONDON 'Development Land Policies in Paris' Spkr. George Nicholson, Chair GLC Planning Cttee. 8pm County Hall. **Org. Labour Land Campaign 01-267 2245.**

THURS 6 DEC

LONDON 'The Renewed Power of New Right 'think tanks': the Left's response'. Spkr. John Walker, Labour Research Dept. 7.30pm The Wheatsheaf, Rathbone Pl, W1.

LONDON Miners Benefit featuring Miners Choir from S. Wales. Spkrs incl. Dennis Skinner, MP, Ali Thomas, NUM. Cabaret, Turkish dancing, food. 7.30pm Hornsey Town Hall, The Broadway, N8. Tickets: £3/£1 UB40. **Org. Tottenham CLP/ Haringey NALGO.**

LONDON Prevention of Terrorism Act plus Video 'A Free Country'. Spkrs. incl. Margaret O'Neill, Sarah Spencer NCCL, Cecil Gutzmore NCAPB. 7.30pm Tottenham Community Project, 628 High Rd, N17. **Org. Haringey Independent Police Cttee.**

LONDON 'Recent developments in the scientific debate on the Nuclear Winter' Spkr. Michael Robinson, Reader in Astronomy, Q. Mary College. 8pm Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, Muswell Hill, N10. Adm. Free. **Details: Jane Morley, Muswell Hill CND 01-889 0571.**

FRI 7 DEC

LAMBETH 'Bop for Bluefields' fund raising disco for popular health care in Bluefields, Nicaragua. Food, late bar, raffle, Barrio Latino salsa band. 8-12pm Rm. 119 Lambeth Town Hall. Tickets: £2/£1 UB40. **Details Wheelchair access: 01-735 6857.**

LONDON International Evening for El Salvador. Yolocamba I-TA, Peggy Seeger & Ewan MacColl and Barricada. 8pm LSE Old Theatre, Houghton St. WC2. Tickets: £3.50/£2 UB40 at door or ELSSOC, 29 Islington Park St, N1 or LSE Union Shop. **Details: Duncan Green/Rachel Urbach 01-359 3976.**

SAT 8 DEC

DUDLEY Feminist Book Fair 10am-4pm Church Hall, King St. **Org. CPGB 0384 234470.**

CHATHAM Joint NUM/Kent TU Alliance Conf. 10am-5pm Town Hall. Major spkrs plus workshops. **Details: Chris Hart 0227 458004.**

LONDON Mozambique & Angola – continuing fight for independence. Study Conf. 10am-5.30pm Uni. of London Union, Malet St, WC1. Adm. £3/£1.50 UB40. **Org. Mozambique Angola Cttee 01-801 1211.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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(Osnabrück)
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17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2LP
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts 5 p.m.

MEETINGS

ENFIELD & HARINGEY. Socialist discussion & Literature. Monday eves 8.15 p.m. Central Library High Cross, Tottenham High Rd, N17 (nr Philip Lane) all welcome. Enfield & Haringey Branch, The Socialist Party of GB.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, *programme of activities. Public talk Sunday* 2 Dec., 8 p.m. 'The Reality of Brotherhood'. U.L.T. 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

CONFERENCES

ANNUAL CONFERENCE. British International Studies Association at Durham University, 17-19 December. Conference Themes: North-South Security Relations, *Middle East, Falklands, Multi-nationals*, International Financial Crisis. Contact: B. A. Roberson, International Relations Dept, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE.

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Labour and the People: Ken Livingstone and Beatrix Campbell on the wider lessons of the GLC.
Let a Thousand Enterprises Bloom: *John Gittings on new moves in China.*
Also:
REVIEWS: Nearly 1985, time to look back on 1984. Special reviews section featuring some of the year's books, music, magazines and videos.
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ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

ATTRACTIVE MALE graduate, young 29, pacific anarchist, seeks pleasant female possibly adept in languages, arts, journalism, chess or (impossible!) philosophy for a sharing, caring relationship and a warming cuddle. I'm alone, please write. Shall reciprocate. Thank you. Box 4017.

BI-CANCERIAN young 50s, Oxon graduate, professional, handsome, masseur, non-effeminate, seeks friends S. or SW, either sex or coloured welcome. ALA fast. Box 4002.

BIRMINGHAM: PROFESSIONAL, independent-minded, humorous, non-smoking male, young 40, separated, seeks to build new relationship with warm, open, attractive female, mid 20s/30s. Box 4012.

CARING, INTELLIGENT, *politically aware* male graduate, 32, on serious side, but likes fun and talk, seeks non-smoking woman of similar age and kindred spirit, for friendship/relationship. S. Yorks. Box 4023.

CHRISTIAN LADY needed, civilised, adventurous, practical, smallish, fortyish, by gentlemanly, scholarly, stable, Christian writer, for faithful, loving partnership in modest, idealistic project, including marriage. Box 4008.

CONTINENTAL MALE, working in the travel trade, looking for presentable girl, who enjoys life. Box 4015.

CROHN'S DISEASE sufferer, early 30s, seeks girlfriend/soulmate (fellow sufferer?) for love *and understanding. Midlands, but try me from* anywhere. Box 9763.

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel: 01-938 1011.

ENGLISH WRITER (29), *socialist, living* London but moving to France early 1985, seeks independent (and solvent) woman of Indian or Bangladeshi origin, similar age. Box 9741.

FRIENDLY 31 year-old female, would like to meet literate, amusing man for walks, talks, outings etc. Near Central London. Box 4014.

ITINERANT MAN, 36, divorced, seeks female company to punctuate long journeys. Intelligence, sense of humour more important than shared interests/outlook. Pref. London Midlands/Yorks/Lancs. Box 4020.

LADY, EARLY 50s, affectionate, homely, art school background; needs to share friendship with good-hearted man, fifties, London. Could arrange Christmas celebration at home, Chelsea area. Box 4001.

LADY, INDEPENDENT 60+, would like companionship, intellectual male of high standing. Box 4004.

MALE SOCIALIST law graduate, 26, *Manchester area.* Hobbies: *fell-walking,* theatre, cinema, travel, seeks female companion. Friendship and/or lasting relationship. Box 4016.

MARRIED MAN, 56, presentable, seeks friendship of socialist female interested in travel, theatre, music, cinema, eating and drinking. Long-term relationship envisaged. Photographs cheerfully exchanged. London area preferred. Box 4019.

MIDDLE-AGED attractive female graduate, seeks companionship of sensitive, lively man interested in music, theatre, travel, countryside, reflecting and communicating. West Country. Box 4021.

NOTTINGHAM MALE, 25, tall, slim, non-smoker, seeks slim, intelligent female, to share love, life, and happiness. Interests: *reading,* cinema, countryside, and much more. Box 4006.

NURSING SISTER, single, Malay origin, 45, *warm plump, attractive, seeks left-wing male,* for permanent, committed relationship and holidays together. Preferably Inner London areas. Box 9687.

OLDER LONDON LADY?
Tall, dark and handsome young graduate man 28, professional, fit, charming, articulate, artistic, cultured, eclectic, amorous, seeks educated and sensual older lady, 30-50, for uncomplicated relationship.
Box 9800

PRETTY, PLUMP, warm, independent, slightly frivolous, successful, freelance woman, 41; interests visual arts, cinema, theatre, architecture, gardens, seeks man friend (lover for fun. London. Box 9759.

SINGLE MALE, 31, recently moved to Lancaster area, interests include: films, theatre, cycling, walking, seeks intelligent woman for friendship. *All replies answered.* Box 4005.

THE MARRIAGE BUREAU '(Heather Jenner) 24 New Bond Street, W1. 01-629 9634. Consult us for individual attention.

UNATTACHED MALE academic, 40s, 5' 8", would like to meet intelligent, attractive female partner, mid-late 30s, interested in music, the arts generally, travel, theatre and sport. London area. Photo appreciated, but not essential. Box 4007.

VERY MYOPIC male, Ametropic, 55, Anglophile, American, literate, lettered, travelled, unencumbered, seeks female with similar opthalmological malady for commiseration, mutuality, association, direction etc. Box 9372.

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like this. Will sane, gorgeous 35+ lady, please contact battered but upright prof. man? Mid 40s, usual vices: string quartets, fringe theatre, English pubs, spectator politics, walking the downs, dread of Christmas in London.
Box 4009

WOMAN ARTIST, 32, concerned with love and truth, seeks man friend to enrich solitude until death. Box 4000.

WOMAN LAWYER, early forties, wide interests, left politics, vegetarian, seeks similar man for long-term, committed relationship. North West area. Box 4022.

18 YEAR-OLD female 'A' level student would like pen-friend, of similar age, interested in art, photography, books, creative writing and originality. Box 4013.

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